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ESSAYS AND STUDIES 1951

Title [redacted]

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ESSAYS AND STUDIES

1951

BEING VOLUME FOUR OF THE NEW SERIES
OF ESSAYS AND STUDIES COLLECTED FOR
THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

BY GEOFFREY TILLOTSON

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

First Edition . . 1951

A S - other
acc no 9738

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8.12.58

Printed in Great Britain by
Wyman & Sons, Ltd., London, Fakenham and Reading
and published by John Murray (Publishers) Ltd.

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I

L'ALLEGRO AND *IL PENSEROSO* IN THEIR RELATION TO SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY POETRY

by J. B. LEISHMAN

I

My only reason for not describing *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* as the most typically seventeenth-century of Milton's shorter poems is that I cannot conceive how any other seventeenth-century poet could possibly have written them. What, though, may be safely asserted is that many of the most delightful characteristics of seventeenth-century poetry in general are there more perfectly exhibited than elsewhere.

It is not an accident that they are written in that octosyllabic couplet which various poets of the earlier seventeenth century brought to perfection: it was precisely the right form both for Milton's subject-matter and for his attitude towards it; and both subject-matter and attitude (or tone) are here further from Spenser (who never used this metre) and nearer to some of the best seventeenth-century poets than anywhere else in what may be called Milton's major minor poems. There is more wit here than elsewhere in his serious poetry—wit, not in the narrower sense of ingeniousness and the devising of ingenious analogies and comparisons (although there are some traces of this), but wit in the wider sense, as denoting a certain flexibility of mind and mood, a certain balance between seriousness and light-heartedness.

There is also some trace in them of that dialectical, argumentative, and debating strain which is so strong in Donne and in some of his successors.

How strong is this debating strain, and what exactly is the debate about? Most of us, I suppose, have always assumed that it was about Mirth and Melancholy, but Dr. Tillyard, partly perhaps because he was looking for evidence to support his belief that the two poems, because they do not appear in the Trinity College Manuscript, must have been written before Milton left Cambridge, has declared that they grew out of Milton's *First Prolusion*, a semi-serious academic exercise, delivered not later than July 1628, on the subject "Whether Day or Night is the more

excellent". Noticing, in his lecture[1] on the two poems, Dr. Johnson's objection that the cheerful man and the meditative man are too much alike, Dr. Tillyard declares:

[1] Published by the English Association, July 1932, and reprinted in *The Miltonic Setting*, 1938. Dr. Tillyard believed that the two poems had been written in the summer of 1631, during Milton's last Long Vacation. More recently Mr. F. W. Bateson (*English Poetry*, 1950, pp. 155–6) has argued (unconvincingly, as it seems to me) in favour of a still earlier date, and would persuade us that the two poems preceded the Nativity Ode and were written during the late summer or autumn of 1629. Mr. Bateson's view stands or falls with his own interpretation of the concluding lines of *Elegia Sexta*, where, after having described his composition of the Nativity Ode, Milton says to Diodati:

> Dona quidem dedimus Christi natalibus illa,
> Illa sub auroram lux mihi prima tulit.
> Te quoque pressa manent patriis meditata cicutis,
> Tu mihi, cui recitem, juducis instar eris.

All things considered, the natural translation and interpretation of these lines seems to me to be as follows: "These strains I offered as some sort of gift to Christ's nativity, these were brought to me by the first fore-dawning light. You too they await, these strains, withheld as yet from publication (*pressa*: cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 388, 'nonumque *prematur* in annum'), composed upon my native pipes; you shall be as a judge to whom I may deliver them in speech (though not in writing)." Mr. Bateson, however, would, in the first place, accept the Columbia edition's translation of the third line, which takes *quoque* with *meditota* and mistranslates *pressa*: "For you other strains too are waiting, strains oft practised, strains struck out from my native country's reeds". Secondly, on the ground that the word *cicuta* is "invariably used in Latin poetry, in a literary extent, to describe pastoral poetry", he assumes that these "other strains" must be pastorals; and, thirdly, he assumes that the only surviving poems of Milton which could be so described are *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Of the three stages in this argument I do not know which is the more precarious. (1) As a whole, the Columbia translation of the third line is impossible. At the best, Mr. Bateson would have to content himself with something like: "For you too some print-shy verses are waiting, composed upon my native pipes". This interpretation, however, although grammatically possible, is neither necessary nor self-evident, and, except for one bent on proving an early date for *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, it solves no old problems and raises many new ones. If the traditional and (semantically) more natural interpretation convicts Milton's Latinity of a certain harshness and inelegance, the new one is open to the objection that *meditata* can be much more naturally referred back to the *dona* and *illa* of the preceding lines than taken as a kind of substantive: if this was really what Milton wanted to say, he should somehow have contrived to introduce a new noun, such as *carmina*. And as for the *patriis cicutis*, their position here may be satisfactorily explained by the fact that Milton has not hitherto mentioned that he has written the Nativity Ode in English. (2) In *classical* Latin poetry *cicuta* (hemlock pipe) is indeed generally used to describe pastoral poetry; but what of Renaissance Latin poetry, and what, above all, of Milton's? No classical Latin poet ever found it necessary to apologize for writing with that humble and rustic instrument the Latin tongue; Milton, though, the Milton of the shorter poems, was continually making a distinction

(*Continued on next page*

> Nevertheless, the two poems *are* sharply contrasted, and the contrast is that between day and night. *L'Allegro* written in praise of day corresponds to the *First Prolusion*; *Il Penseroso* written in praise of night corresponds to what Milton would have said had he been called to take the other side.

To this it may be shortly replied that *L'Allegro* cannot be described either as a poem about day or as a poem in praise of day, and the *Il Penseroso* cannot be described either as a poem about night or as a poem in praise of night. In each poem, as Warton observed long ago, there is a day piece and a night piece; both the cheerful man and the pensive man have their characteristic day-time and their characteristic evening pleasures, although, as might be expected, in *L'Allegro* it is the day-time and in *Il Penseroso* the evening pleasures that preponderate; and while the list of pleasures in *L'Allegro* begins at dawn, with the lark, that in *Il Penseroso* begins at night, with the nightingale. L'Allegro's evening pleasures begin after the rustic company have heard tales of Robin Goodfellow and gone to bed: he then goes to town ("Towred Cities please us then, And the busie humm of men"), sees tournaments, masques and comedies and hears soft Lydian airs. And just as L'Allegro has his evening pleasures, Il Penseroso has his day-time ones: his dawn is ushered in by a shower; he goes for a solitary walk in the woods; meditates, sleeps and dreams beside a stream, paces the studious cloister, hears organ and choir in a cathedral or in a college chapel. If, then, there is a contrast between the two poems, it is not that between day and night, and if there is a debate, it is not on the respective merits of day and night. In spite of Dr. Tillyard, we may be content to believe that when Milton exorcised Melancholy and invoked Mirth he supposed himself to be writing a poem about Mirth; that when he exorcised Mirth and invoked Melancholy he supposed himself to be writing a poem about Melancholy; and that mirth and melancholy did not mean precisely the same to him, in spite of Dr. Johnson's complaint that the two characters were not kept sufficiently apart.

The question, what exactly did Milton mean by melancholy? is complex and interesting and will detain us for some time. First, though, it is worth observing that for the idea of two contrasted poems, one praising the pleasures of mirth and the other praising the pleasures of

between his English and his Latin poetry, and by his native pipes or his native reeds he meant, primarily, not any particular kind of poetry, but any kind of poetry composed in his native tongue. (3) If, however, it be insisted that Milton *must* mean pastoral poetry, and if it be assumed that he preserved every poem he ever wrote, it may be replied that the Nativity Ode, with its shepherds, might be more (though still not very) appropriately described as a pastoral than either *L'Allegro* or *Il Penseroso*.

melancholy, there existed far better and more obvious precedent than his own early prolusion on the superiority of day to night. It was, I think, Sympson, one of the co-editors of the edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays published in 1750, who was the first to point out certain obvious resemblances between *Il Penseroso* and Fletcher's song in *The Nice Valour* beginning "Hence, all you vaine Delights". Both play and song were first printed in the folio of 1647, but long before that date the song had become very popular, and it appears in several manuscript collections from about 1620 onwards. In one of these, MS. Malone 21 in the Bodleian, it is followed by a reply entitled *Against Melancholy* and ascribed to "Dr. Strode", that is, to William Strode (1602–1645), Canon of Christ Church, Chaplain to Bishop Corbet, and Public Orator at Oxford. Both Fletcher's poem and Strode's reply to it were printed in the Miscellanies *Wits Interpreter* (1655) and *Wit Restor'd* (1658).

After having dismissed, rather summarily perhaps, Dr. Tillyard's hypothesis, I rather hesitate to advance one of my own. I will, though, venture to suggest that someone may have shown Milton a manuscript of Fletcher's poem and Strode's reply and that this may have started him off. This hypothesis has four great merits: it is simple; it conflicts with no existing facts; it involves no new interpretation of Milton's poems; no one can prove that it is untrue.

Let us, before proceeding, have the two poems before us. Here is Fletcher's:

Hence, all you vaine Delights,
As short as are the nights,
  Wherein you spend your folly.
Ther's nought in this life sweet,
If man were wise to see 't,
  But onely Melancholy,
  O sweetest melancholy.
Welcome, folded Armes and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fastned to the ground,
A tongue chain'd up without a sound.

Fountaine heads, and pathlesse Groves,
Places which pale passion loves:
Moon-light walkes, when all the fowles
Are warmly hous'd, save Bats and Owles;
  A mid-night Bell, a parting groane,
  These are the sounds we feed upon;
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley,
Nothing's so daintie sweet as lovely melancholy.

Strode's reply, though not without merit, is far less memorable and distinguished. It is also less romantic and less pictorial than Fletcher's poem, and nearer to some of Jonson's more epigrammatic lyrics.

> Returne my joyes and hither bring
> A heart not taught to speak but sing,
> A jolly spleen, an inward feast,
> A causelesse laugh without a jest;
> A face which gladnesse doth anoint,
> An arme for joy flung out of joynt;
> A sprightfull gate that leaves no print,
> And makes a feather of a flint;
> A heart that's lighter then the aire,
> An eye still daunceing in its spheare;
> Strong mirth which nothing can controule,
> A body nimbler than a Soule;
> Free wandring thoughts not ty'de to muse,
> Which thinke on all things, nothing choose,
> Which ere wee see them come are gone:
> These life itselfe doth live upon.
> Then take no care, but only to be jolly:
> To be more wretched then we must is folly.

I may, perhaps, be too confident in my hypothesis, but it seems to me almost self-evident that it was Fletcher's

> Hence, all you vaine Delights

which suggested

> Hence vain deluding joyes

and the rest of the elaborate abjuration at the beginning of *Il Penseroso*, and that it was Strode's catalogue of the qualities which his returning joys were to bring with them which suggested the various personified qualities and moods which Mirth and Melancholy are exhorted to bring with them in Milton's poems. It also seems to me that the luxurious, or, as a seventeenth-century writer might have called it, the humorous and self-pleasing, the on the whole very agreeable, melancholy of Fletcher's poem is much like the kind of melancholy which Milton invokes and describes in *Il Penseroso*, as distinct from the kind which he abjures at the beginning of *L'Allegro*.

There is a further and rather important resemblance between Milton's poems and the pair which I think may have suggested them. Fletcher and Strode do not *argue* as Donne would have done had he chosen to

exert himself upon this topic; they merely *describe*. Fletcher says in effect: "Melancholy's a delicious thing: feel, look, listen"; Strode says in effect: "Mirth's the thing I want—makes you feel like this". This is very different from Donne's method, when, in *The Anagram*, he sets himself to persuade an imaginary friend that it is in all respects better and wiser to marry an old and ugly woman than a young and handsome one, or when he argues with an imaginary mistress that she is refusing to him what she has permitted to a flea. There is *something* of argument, of debate, of paradox, of hyperbole in these poems of Fletcher and Strode and Milton, but not that mock-serious application of close and ingenious argument to the maintenance of monstrously absurd paradox which we often find in Donne. Their poems are also, though far from solemn, more serious than those two of Donne's which I have mentioned. They take their subject more seriously and they treat it more seriously; their subject, one may say, *means* more to them. Milton's poems, as I need scarcely insist, are more serious and elaborate and important than those of Fletcher and Strode, which, in comparison, are almost trifles; nevertheless, Milton's poems too are, partly at least, in the same tradition, the same fashion, the fashion of serious, and yet at the same time light-hearted, poetical debate.

There is indeed a relation between Milton's First Prolusion and his *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, but it is very much slighter and more distant than Dr. Tillyard seems to suppose. For the fact is that the relation between these two poems and Milton's First Prolusion is no more and no less intimate than that between these poems and several of Milton's other prolusions, or, for that matter, between these poems and the whole tradition of academic paradox and debate. Something of the same kind of wit, something of the same kind of intention, namely, to show your wit, to show what you could do, is present both in the poems and in the prolusions. Something, but only something. For, after the abjurations with which each poems begins, the purely paradoxical or hyperbolic element in Milton's poems ceases, if it is present at all, to be felt as paradox or hyperbole. In this respect *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* differ greatly, not only from some of the outrageously and quite unseriously paradoxical poems of Donne, but even from such a poem as Marvell's *The Garden*.

> No white nor red was ever seen
> So am'rous as this lovely green.

Throughout Marvell's praise of the garden we are delightfully aware of the element of hyperbole and paradox, whereas Milton's praise of the

pleasures of mirth and of melancholy is, in comparison, as unhyperbolical as, let as say, Ben Jonson's Virgilian and Horatian praise of a country life in his epistle To Sir Robert Wroth.

Each of Milton's poems might almost be described as a Catalogue of Delights, a formula which relates them, not merely to the two poems of Fletcher and Strode, but also to Marlowe's *Passionate Shepherd*, Ralegh's reply thereto (both printed in *Englands Helicon*), and to the many imitations (including Donne's *The Baite*) which those two poems provoked. Todd, indeed, in his introductory remarks to *L'Allegro*, says that it has been observed (he does not say by whom) that the concluding lines of Marlowe's and Ralegh's poems,

> If these delights thy mind may move,
> Then live with me, and be my love,

"seem to have furnished Milton with the hint for the last lines both of his *Allegro* and *Penseroso*"[1].

II

The subject of the two poems, then, is the contrast between the pleasures of mirth and the pleasures of melancholy, and they have some relation, though not, perhaps, a very close one, to a well-established academic and poetic tradition of witty and paradoxical debate. Let us now return to Dr. Johnson's complaint that the contrast between the two poems and the two kinds of pleasure is not great enough, and to the question of what exactly Milton meant by melancholy.

"I know not" Johnson remarked,

> whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth.

In a sense Johnson was right. He was aware of some apparent inconsistency, and it lies, I think, in a certain disparity between programme and performance, between what we are led to expect and what we actually get: that is to say, the melancholy abjured in the introductory stanza of *L'Allegro* as

> loathed Melancholy
> Of *Cerberus*, and blackest midnight born,

[1] *Poetical Works of John Milton*, 2nd ed., 1809, VI. 69.

is not the kind of melancholy which is invoked and of which the pleasures are described in *Il Penseroso*; and the heart-easing mirth invoked at the beginning of *L'Allegro*, together with

> Jest and youthful Jollity,
> Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,

and so forth, has only the very slightest connexion with the mood or moods whose pleasures are actually described in the course of the poem. The mood of *L'Allegro* is not really the mood of Strode's lines against melancholy, although, as I have suggested, it was probably Fletcher's praise of melancholy and Strode's reply to it which suggested to Milton the idea of his two companion poems. Milton's two poems are less antithetical than Fletcher's and Strode's. The mood of Strode's poem,

> Returne my joyes and hither bring
> A heart not taught to speake but sing,
> A jolly spleen, an inward feast,
> A causelesse laugh without a jest,

and so forth, is indeed the mood of the opening lines of *L'Allegro*, of the invocation of "heart-easing Mirth" and of "Laughter holding both his sides"; but although Milton can abstractly approve of such a mood and abstractly personify it, he is, of course, quite incapable of evoking, with pleasure to himself and to his readers, a succession of scenes in all of which he shall appear laughing and holding both his sides, tripping on light fantastic toe, and otherwise joyfully-jollificating. Therefore, as soon as the invocation is finished, as soon as personification gives place to exemplification, as soon as L'Allegro himself appears and proceeds to go through his round of day-time and evening pleasures, there is a very considerable sobering down. As Warton observed:

> There is specifically no mirth in contemplating a fine landscape. And even his landscape, although it has flowery meads and flocks, wears a shade of pensiveness; and contains *russet* lawns, fallows *grey*, and *barren* mountains, overhung with *labouring* clouds. Its old turreted mansion peeping from the trees, awakens only a train of solemn and romantic, perhaps melancholy, reflection. Many a pensive man listens with delight to the milk-maid *singing blithe*, to the mower *whetting his scythe*, and to a distant peal of village bells. He chose such illustrations as minister matter for true poetry and genuine description. Even his most brilliant imagery is mellowed with the sober hues of philosophic meditation.[1]

[1] *Poems upon Several Occasions by John Milton*, 2nd ed., 1791, p. 97.

And just as the exemplifications of cheerfulness in *L'Allegro* are very different from the personifications of it, so too both the personifications and exemplifications of melancholy in *Il Penseroso* have nothing in common with the "loathed Melancholy" abjured at the beginning of *L'Allegro*, and much in common with the rather attractive, romantic, and luxurious melancholy exemplified in Fletcher's poem. Indeed, one may say that Strode, whose poem does not get beyond personifying various aspects of cheerfulness, suggested to Milton the idea of personification, while Fletcher, who exemplifies what he means by melancholy,

> Foutaine heads, and pathlesse Groves,
> Places which pale passion loves,

suggested to him the idea of exemplifying, as distinct from merely personifying, the two moods; although, when he actually got to work, Milton found that he could follow Fletcher more closely than he could follow Strode. He could, that is to say, amplify and diversify and sublimate Fletcher's exemplifications of melancholy, but he could not exemplify, as distinct from merely personifying, the boisterousness of Strode's reply. And exemplification rather than personification was to provide the main substance of his poems, if only because they were to be very much longer than the pair which suggested them.

Nevertheless, although the moods of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are less sharply contrasted than in the poems of Fletcher and Strode, although it is only in the rhetorical introductory abjurations and in the personification of Mirth and her companions that anything of the originally crude antithesis appears, and although even Warton, a great admirer of these poems, agrees with Johnson in finding some mixture of melancholy in Milton's mirth, there still remains a contrast between the moods of the two poems which is both greater and subtler than has commonly been noticed, if not by readers, at any rate by critics. Perhaps I can best indicate the nature of this contrast by remarking that while L'Allegro's pleasures, though far from boisterous, nearly all have some admixture or suggestion of human society and are of the kind which, in some degree, take one, as the saying is, out of oneself, the pleasures described in *Il Penseroso* are more solitary, more introspective, more purely the pleasures of reverie and of solitary contemplation and imagination. L'Allegro, although he scarcely, perhaps, takes any very active share in them, is still fairly continuously aware of the doings of his fellow-men, and reflections of their activities and pleasures largely determine and largely colour his moods. What would his morning walk be without the sound

of the huntsman's horn, the whistling ploughman, the singing milkmaid, the scythe-whetting mower, and the counting shepherds? Later he approaches the smoking cottage chimney of Thyrsis and Corydon and closes his round of day-time pleasures among country-dancers and story-tellers. His evening pleasures are essentially sociable: tournaments, masques, and comedies. And even when he is alone he looks around him with delighted attention and is taken out of himself by what he sees: nibbling sheep, labouring clouds, daisy-pied meadows, brooks and rivers, romantically embowered towers. The pleasures of Il Penseroso are much more brooding and solitary. Indeed, only once is there any suggestion of human society, when, at the very end of the poem, he hears organ and choir in some cathedral or college chapel. He begins his night (for apparently he does a good part of his sleeping by day) with a stroll in some lonely wood, listening to the nightingale, gazing at the wandering moon, hearing the distant curfew—sights and sounds more likely to prolong than to interrupt his reverie. He then sits alone by the glowing embers of his hearth and ascends to his lonely tower, where he reads Plato, Greek tragedies (L'Allegro did not read, but visited, comedies) and various romantic poems. When day comes he again repairs to his wood to rest and dream by a brookside, and then, after pacing the studious cloister, first encounters his fellow-beings at divine service.

During the seventeenth century the word melancholy had many different senses and shades of meaning. The noun, in what may be called its strict or proper sense, denoted that dark and dangerous mental disease of melancholia, produced partly by physical causes, such as lack of exercise or ill-regulated diet, and partly by indulgence in certain mental habits, which Burton describes and for which he suggests remedies in his famous book.

> Loathed Melancholy
> Of *Cerberus* and blackest midnight born.

In Shakespeare the word nearly always denotes a disposition which is regarded as unpleasant, unfortunate, or deplorable: Viola's imaginary sister fell into a green and yellow melancholy, and Hamlet feared that the ghost might be a devil which, out of his weakness and his melancholy, was abusing him to damn him. And in Elizabethan usage generally the word denoted, if not the actual disease of melancholia, at any rate a mood of habitual sadness and despression, true though it be that the mood was often affected by persons with pretensions to superior refinement. It was, characteristically, during the more analytic and introspective seven-

teenth century that the word came to be used to denote a certain tender and pensive sadness which, at times perhaps not without some sense of guiltiness and of playing with fire, was regarded as positively agreeable. William Drummond, for example, declared in one of his madrigals that when his mistress wept

A sweet Melancholie my Senses keepes;[1]

Fletcher declared that

Nothing's so daintie sweet as lovely melancholy;

while Milton in *Il Penseroso* invokes "divinest Melancholy", and in *Comus* (l. 545)makes the Attendant Spirit describe himself as having been

Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy.

The history of the adjective is similar. Shakespeare's "melancholy Jaques" is saturnine rather than sweetly pensive; when Capulet, after the discovery of the supposed death of Juliet, declares

All things that are ordained festival
Turn from their office to black funeral,

and speaks of "melancholy bells" (IV, v, 86), he means sad, gloomy, dismal bells, and when Orlando in *As You Like It* exclaims to the banished Duke and his company

But whate'er you are
That in this desert inaccessible
Under the shade of melancholy boughs
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time,

he means that he finds their situation gloomy and depressing, rather frightening, perhaps a little pathetic: certainly not that he finds it agreeably romantic. Nevertheless, some forty years later (8 October, 1641) Evelyn thus described the royal park at Brussels:

> From hence we walked into the Parke, which for being intirely within the walls of the Citty is particularly remarkable; nor is it less pleasant than if in the most solitary recessess, so naturally is it furnish'd with whatever may render it agreeable, melancholy, and country-like.

[1] *Poems*, ed. Kastner, I, 35.

In the early part of 1659 Anthony à Wood was taken by a friend to visit one Hannibal Baskervyle who inhabited "a private and lone house in or neare Bagley Wood", "an old house situated in a romancey place". This Mr. Baskervyle was very civil, "but A. W. found him to be a melancholy and retir'd man"; nevertheless

> A. Wood afterwards frequented the house, especially in the time of his son Thomas Baskervyle, to refreshe his mind with a melancholy walke, and with the retiredness of the place.[1]

Thus, while Wood found the melancholy and retiredness of the elder Baskervyle rather depressing, he found the melancholy and retiredness of his grounds, with their "romancey" situation, rather refreshing. And the fact that Wood calls the situation of the place where he took these refreshingly melancholy walks "romancey" suggests that "melancholy" might well have been added to those *Four Words* of which Logan Pearsall Smith so delightfully and illuminatingly investigated the sense-history, and that, accordingly, the origin of romanticism, the romantic mood, and even of the romantic movement might have been taken yet a little further back. For it has often been remarked that something like a new taste had been formed when, shortly after 1650, the words "romancy" and "romantic" began to be commonly applied to scenes which recalled those in old romances, "old castles, mountains and forests, pastoral plains, waste and solitary places."[2] It is true that it is not until the eighteenth century that we hear, from Thomson, of a "fine, romantic kind of melancholy"[3], but already in 1659 we find Wood enjoying a refreshing melancholy in a romancy place, and more than forty years before that Fletcher had discovered the sweetness of melancholy and of scenes where that sweetness could be most luxuriously savoured. It is appropriate that the romantic discovery of the sweetness of melancholy should have been made during the seventeenth century, when so many other important discoveries were made, and when so many characteristically modern movements, including, for all I know, the Romantic Movement, began. Fletcher, perhaps, was the first romantic. Donne was not of the movement, nor, I think, was Jonson, but Milton, the Milton of *Il Penseroso*, certainly was, and, as I shall insist in a moment, it is significant that the Wartons and Hurd and other unimpeachable eighteenth-century romantics, revolting, as school-children say, against the Age of

[1] *The Life and Times of Anthony à Wood*, ed. Llewelyn Powys, 1932, pp. 64–5.
[2] L. Pearsall Smith, *Four Romantic Words*, in *Words and Idioms*, 1928, p. 79.
[3] op. cit., p. 76.

Prose and Reason, should have continually praised his "romantic" scenes and descriptions.

Before leaving this topic of the kind of melancholy exemplified in *Il Penseroso*, I will notice a conjecture advanced by Thomas Warton in his edition of Milton's Shorter Poems, from which I have already quoted. Neglecting Fletcher and Strode, Warton believed that Milton's two poems had been suggested by a poem of Burton's:

> He seems to have borrowed the subject of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, together with some particular thoughts, expressions, and rhymes, more especially the idea of a contrast between these two dispositions, from a forgotten poem prefixed to the first edition of Burton's *Anatomie of Melancholy*, entitled "The author's abstract of Melancholy or a Dialogue between Pleasure and Pain". Here Pain is Melancholy.[1]

Now although it seems to me more than likely that Milton knew both Burton's poem and Burton's book, and that he took some suggestions from both, I must insist that Burton's poem is not what Warton says it is. It is not really a dialogue between Pleasure and Pain, and certainly not a debate between Mirth and Melancholy, but a series of alternate representations of the pleasures and pains of melancholy in the serious Burtonian sense: of those oscillations between exaltation and dejection which attend the unrestrained indulgence of solitary imagination, and which, if not checked, may finally unhinge the mind. Here is a representative passage:

> When to my selfe I act and smile,
> With pleasing thoughts the time beguile;
> By a brooke side or wood so greene,
> Vnheard, vnsought for, or vnseene,
> A thousand pleasures doe me blesse,
> And crowne my soule with happinesse.
> All my ioyes besides are folly,
> None so sweete as Melancholy.
> When I lie, sit, or walke alone,
> I sigh, I grieue, making great moane,
> In a darke groue, or irkesome denne,
> With discontentes and Furies then,
> A thousand miseries at once,
> Mine heauy heart and soule ensconce.
> All my griefes to this are iolly,
> Nine so soure as Melancholy.[2]

[1] ed. 1791, p. 94.

[2] I quote from the poem as it was first printed, in the third edition, 1628. Warton wrongly supposed that it had appeared in the first edition, 1621.

Burton's poem might, in fact, be regarded as a series of alternate representations of Fletcher's "sweetest Melancholy" and Milton's "loathed Melancholy", that melancholy into which, as Burton insists, sweetest melancholy, if excessively indulged in, may easily turn. For Burton sweetest melancholy is a dangerous thing, and it is against such "pleasing melancholy and vaine conceits" that, in his chapter "Exercise rectified of Body and Minde", he recommends sight-seeing, recreation and study. I will quote some scattered sentences from the chapter, for it contains, as Warton observed, many parallels with Milton's poems.

> To walke amongst Orchards, Gardens, Bowers, and Arbors, artificiall Wildernesses, and greene thickets, Arches, Groues, Pooles, Fishponds, betwixt wood and water in a faire Meddowe, by a riuer side, to disport in some pleasant plaine, or runne vp a steepe hill, or sit in a shady seat, must needs bee a delectable recreation . . . To see some Pageant, or sight go by, as at Coronations, Weddings, and such like solemnities, to see an Embassadour or a Prince met, receaued, entertained with Masks, shews, fire-works, &c. . . . The Country hath it's recreations, the Citty it's seuerall Gymnicks and exercises, Maygames, Feasts, Wakes, & merry meetings to solace themselues . . . *Dancing, Singing, Masking, Mumming, Stage-playes,* howsoeuer they be heauily censured by some seuere *Catoes*, yet if opportunely and soberly used, may iustly be approued . . . To read, walke and see Mappes, Pictures, Statues, old Coynes of severall sorts in a fayre Gallery, artificiall perspectiue glasses, old reliques, Roman antiquities, variety of colors.[1]

Burton is here recommending to the man carried away with "a pleasing melancholy and vaine conceits" various things that will "take him out of himself", make him less introspective and more extravert. And if anyone positively insists on somehow bringing Burton into *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, I think we might at least allow him to maintain that in *L'Allegro* Milton has exemplified various pleasures and activities (many of them mentioned by Burton) which will correct the pleasing, the sweetest, the divinest melancholy of *Il Penseroso*, and prevent it from turning into Melancholia. Not that Il Penseroso lives entirely in his own solitary imagination; he does, after all, spend a considerable time reading in his lonely tower and he regularly attends divine service. Even when Milton is most characteristically seventeenth century he nearly always is so with a difference. His divinest melancholy is less paradoxical than Fletcher's sweetest melancholy, less illicit, less a kind of secret indulgence. Milton, after all, identifies himself, at least to a considerable extent, with

[1] Part. 2, Sect. 2, Memb. 4, ed. 1621, pp. 341–51.

the two characters, and he just cannot imagine himself as indulging in any mood or pleasure that is at all reprehensible.

III

Having now seen more clearly what is the real nature of the contrast between the two poems and what Milton meant by melancholy, let us proceed to consider *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* as descriptive poems.

It will be well to apply first the method of comparison and to decide in what sense they are not descriptive, and then to apply the method of analysis, and, proceeding from the more general to the more particular, to decide precisely in what sense they are. Let us begin with Warton's statement that they may be called "the two first descriptive poems in the English language". What Warton and his contemporaries meant by a descriptive poem was one where description was not merely incidental or illustrative but essential, a poem which existed purely for the sake of its descriptions, and whose descriptions were mainly of natural sights and sounds, not of individual human beings, though sometimes, perhaps, of typical human activities. Milton's poems, it is true, are not purely descriptive in this sense, since they are controlled by an idea, that of the exemplification of the pleasures appropriate to two contrasted but complementary moods; nevertheless we may be content without quibbling to regard them as examples of what is ordinarily meant by descriptive poetry.

Have they any predecessors? They are obviously different from, on the one hand, the purely topographical or guide-book description of Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* and, on the other hand, from the almost purely witty description of Donne's two verse-letters entitled *The Storme* and *The Calme*. The Donne who wrote these two poems may perhaps be regarded as the originator of a kind of descriptive, or professedly descriptive, poetry which became very popular during the seventeenth century, and of which the formula would seem to be: to how many other things, ideas, experiences can this particular experience, or this particular object in front of me, be related? The chief characteristic of this kind of poetry is the ingenious simile, and the poet is far less concerned with his professed subject, which may be almost completely indifferent to him, than with the ingenious things he can find to say about it, the number of apparently unlikely things and ideas to which he can somehow succeed

in relating it. Clearly, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are quite outside this tradition, although they do contain one or two ingenious similes. So far from being indifferent to what he is describing, Milton is preoccupied with it, fascinated by it, in love with it. His two poems, then, are descriptive neither in the topographical manner of Drayton nor in the purely witty manner of Donne. Their only predecessors or prototypes are certain "Catalogues of Delights" (if I may repeat my own phrase) and certain descriptive exemplifications of more or less romantic moods—Fletcher's lines on melancholy, Burton's poem prefixed to the *Anatomy*, some of the descriptions in Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, notably, perhaps, those of and by the wronged Aspasia in *The Maid's Tragedy*.

What, then, of their successors? How do they stand in relation to later poems which may be classified as descriptive? An interesting piece for comparison is that long and rather rambling poem on Appleton House which Marvell wrote sometime in 1651 or 1652, after, I cannot but think, he had bought and red Milton's 1645 volume. For *Appleton House* stands somewhere between the purely witty manner of Donne and Milton's manner in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*: Marvell is as witty and ingenious as Donne, but, like Milton, he is also in love with what he is describing:

> And now to the Abbyss I pass
> Of that unfathomable Grass,
> Where Men like Grashoppers appear,
> But Grashoppers are Gyants there:
> They, in there squeking Laugh, contemn
> Us as we walk more low then them:
> And, from the Precipices tall
> Of the green spir's, to us do call.
>
> To see Men through this Meadow Dive,
> We wonder how they rise alive,
> As, under Water, none does know
> Whether he fall through it or go.
> But, as the Marriners that sound,
> And show upon their head the Ground,
> They bring up Flow'rs so to be seen,
> And prove they've at the Bottom been.

Milton is obviously far less witty than Marvell, but, on the other hand, he is far wittier in the seventeenth-century sense than the almost professional nature poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *L' Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are not descriptive poetry in the sense in which

Thomson's *Seasons*, or Wordsworth's *Poems on the Naming of Places*, or many famous things by Tennyson are descriptive poetry. Milton does not set out to give minute descriptions of natural scenes and natural objects, but to give precise descriptions, precise exemplifications, precise evocations of the pleasures appropriate to two contrasted moods. His outlines, the directions he gives to our imagination, are as precise and concise as possible, but he generally leaves us to fill in the visual detail for ourselves.

> Or let my Lamp at midnight hour,
> Be seen in some high lonely Towr—

that example will do as well as any: a *seen* lamp in a tower that is high and lonely. Whether the tower be old and grey, round or square, ruinous, ivy-mantled, moss-grown or lichenous, we may decide for ourselves. This very important distinction between precision of outline, or of imaginative direction, achieved mainly by the use of most carefully chosen adjectives, and minuteness of visual detail, is one that has been completely overlooked by Mr. Eliot in perhaps the most unfortunate of all his writings on Milton[1]: after declaring that, for his purposes, the most important fact about Milton is his blindness, he there complains that "the imagery in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* is all general", and that, among other things, the whistling ploughman is not individualized. Was Mr. Eliot, I wonder, like Irving Babbitt, recoiling from what seemed to him a symptom of romanticism? For there can, I think, be little doubt that it was the essentially evocative nature of Milton's descriptions which led many of his eighteenth-century admirers to call them romantic. Thomas Warton, for example, in the Preface to his edition, sees in Milton's shorter poems 'fiction and fancy . . . picturesque description and romantic imagery.' Consider, as a description that would probably have seemed to Warton and his contemporaries especially romantic, this from *Il Penseroso*:

> And missing thee, I walk unseen
> On the dry smooth-shaven Green,
> To behold the wandring Moon,
> Riding neer her highest noon,
> Like one that had bin led astray
> Through the Heav'ns wide pathles way;
> And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
> Stooping through a fleecy cloud.

[1] "A Note on the Verse of John Milton" in *Essays and Studies*, XXI (1935).

What, especially the third of those couplets, could be more "romantic"? Shelley might almost have written it, the Shelley of "Art thou pale for weariness . . .?" It is true that Shelley dwells on the imagined loneliness of the moon more lingeringly and emphatically than Milton, but the two descriptions, the two ways of seeing it, even the two ways of saying it, still remain strikingly similar. Critics have often complained of a lack of mystery in *Paradise Lost*, but both there and in Milton's shorter poems there is no lack of a suggestiveness that may not inappropriately be called romantic. Milton is commonly regarded, and perhaps rightly, as the most classical of our poets, and yet, as I have observed, we find many eighteenth-century precursors of the so-called Romantic Revival continually praising what seem to them his romantic descriptions, his romantic wildness, his romantic fancy. One could quite plausibly maintain that the classical Milton is the most romantic of seventeenth-century poets. One could also maintain that the official romantics (if I may so describe them) tended to exploit and overemphasize what in Milton remain elements in a balanced whole. The wandering moon and the sound of the far-off curfew,

> Over some wide-water'd shoar,
> Swinging slow with sullen roar,

occupy only a few lines of *Il Penseroso*, whereas with a full-blown romantic each might well occupy a whole poem. We have already noticed some interesting differences and resemblances between *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, as descriptive poems, and Marvell's *Appleton House*: compare them with those two indisputably beautiful and indisputably romantic poems, Collins's "Ode to Evening" and Keats's "Ode to Autumn". In comparison with Milton, Collins and Keats (I do not say it in any pejorative sense) are much more monotonous, much more willing to linger and luxuriate in single images and single moods. I will leave the subject with a pregnant observation of W. P. Ker's: "Romance is often near its best with authors who are not thinking about it, or who think other things more important."[1]

The precisely evocative descriptions in these two poems sometimes have a touch (it is no more) of that wit which is still popularly and, as it seems to me, inappropriately, termed "metaphysical".

> Towers and Battlements it sees
> Boosom'd high in tufted Trees,
> Wher perhaps som beauty lies,
> The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.

[1] *Collected Essays*, 1925, II, 318.

Here there is a truly remarkable combination of romantic suggestiveness (what precision and concentration in that second line, where every word counts!), of characteristically seventeenth-century wit, and of characteristically Miltonic scholarship. The Cynosure is the Dog's Tail or Lesser Bear, the star by which the Phoenician sailors steered, and the wit, the conceit, is reminiscent of Marvell, although the word itself, like the epithet Hippotades for Aeolus in *Lycidas*, is Miltonically recondite. There are a few other examples of such conceits in these poems. The description of sunrise in *L'Allegro*:

> Right against the Eastern gate,
> Where the great Sun begins his state,
> Roab'd in flames, and Amber light,
> The clouds in thousand Liveries dight.

The sun, that is to say, begins his royal progress or "state" from the eastern gate, attended by courtier-like clouds in robes of a thousand different colours. This, though far more appropriate and decorous, has perhaps some affinity with the description of

> the Sun in bed
> Curtain'ed with cloudy red,
> Pillowing his chin upon an Orient wave

in the Nativity Ode, a conceit in the manner of Sylvester or of Crashaw rather than of Donne or Marvell. For what distinguishes Crashaw's conceits from Donne's and from those of many of Donne's imitators is their picturesqueness, their bright visual images. Indeed, the picturesqueness is often more striking than the ingenuity, although the ingenuity, the wit, prevents the images from being just conventionally pretty. Todd compares with Milton's image of the sun beginning his state some lines from a poem in Drummond's *Flowres of Sion* (1623). Drummond is freely translating from a poem of Sannazaro's, and in this passage he greatly elaborates his original. Sannazaro merely says:

> E se vedendo il Sol dall' Oriente
> Venir di' rai vestito,

"and if, seeing the sun from the East come clad with rays"—a passage which Drummond expands and elaborates as follows:

> If, when farre in the East yee doe behold
> Foorth from his Christall Bed the Sunne to rise,
> With rosie Robes and Crowne of flaming Gold.[1]

[1] *Poetical Works*, ed. Kastner, II, 14.

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From Petrarch onwards Italian poetry, of which Drummond was a devoted admirer and imitator, abounds with such images, and so too does Spenser's. It is such essentially picturesque, Italianate, or Spenserian imagery that Crashaw's wit generally combines and permeates. And when such imagery (quite unlike Donne's) is presented in some strikingly ingenious or epigrammatic or antithetical way we call it a conceit, or even (inappropriately, as I think) metaphysical. What exactly is the difference between a characteristically Italianate or Spenserian personification and a characteristic early seventeenth-century conceit? Is it a difference of kind, or merely one of degree? Perhaps it is like the point where day passes into night, of which Burke said that, although no one could define it exactly, everyone knew when it had taken place. The chief difference between Milton's personification of the sun and Drummond's is that in Milton's the implied comparison of the sun to an earthly monarch is several degrees more particularized. Drummond's sun only resembles an earthly monarch in having robes and a crown. Earthly monarchs do not rise from crystal beds. In other words, in Drummond's personification the resemblance is not more insisted upon than the difference. But Milton's sun resembles an earthly monarch in setting out on a progress and in being attended by courtier-like clouds, although it is true that these detailed resemblances are rather fleetingly suggested than insisted upon and, as it were, underlined, as they might have been by Cowley in the *Davideis*. Nevertheless, there is in Milton's personification an ingenuity, a wit, a quaintness (as we might be inclined to call it) which there is not in Drummond's, or in the nineteenth Psalm, where the sun "is as a bridgeroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race", or in Spenser's famous personification which that passage in the nineteenth Psalm partly suggested:

> At length the golden oriental gate
> Of greatest heaven gan to open faire;
> And Phoebus, fresh as bridegroome to his mate,
> Came dancing forth, shaking his deawy haire.[1]

What needs to be insisted upon is that the ingenious comparison, which, although it is only one element, and by no means the most important one, in Donne's poetry, has so often been regarded as *the* characteristic of so-called metaphysical poetry in general, can, and often does, take as its substance or subject-matter precisely that picturesque, Italianate, Spenserian, or, as one might be inclined to say, typically Elizabethan imagery

[1] *F.Q.*, I, v, 2.

which Donne seems to have deliberately rejected. Such witty or ingenious combinations of traditional and picturesque imagery are very frequent in certain sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian poets, Guarini, Marino, and the rest, poets whom Crashaw seems to have admired; and in Milton's early poems the kind of ingenuity so assiduously cultivated by most of his academic contemporaries is sometimes applied, not always successfully, to his predominantly Spenserian or Italianate imagery. Wit, though, except in the wide sense, was never more than a very occasional intruder into Milton's poetry. It is above all in Marvell, a poet in some respects even more eclectic than Milton, that we may observe how wit and ingenuity can be combined in all manner of ways with traditional imagery, traditional forms, and traditional themes. Too much tidy-mindedness and love of classification have prevented readers from seeing in what a variety of ways the manners of Spenser, of Jonson, and of Donne, poets commonly regarded as the founders of distinct schools, could be combined.

While, then, 'The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes' is the kind of conceit one might almost expect to find in Marvell, that about the sun beginning his state is more like what one might expect to find in Sylvester or Crashaw. Much more like Marvell is the astrological metaphor in

> store of Ladies, whose bright eies
> Rain influence, and judge the prize
> Of Wit, or Arms.

Here too, though, the wit is no more than the lightest of flashes, and how much more appropriately might this passage, like so many others in these poems, be called an evocation rather than a description! There are a few other flashes or gleams of this ingenious and surprising kind of wit that was so popular with many of Milton's contemporaries, but in every case the ingenious or surprising comparison is merely implied, never elaborated or insisted upon. There is the Platonic conceit, as one might call it, in

> Untwisting all the chains that ty
> The hidden soul of harmony,

where the soul of harmony is conceived of as a kind of sleeping beauty, a mere potentiality, first actualised, awakened into life, by the singer and the instruments. There is some likeness between this conceit and a very famous one at the beginning of Michelangelo's sixteenth sonnet:

Si come nella penna e nell' inchiostro
È l'alto e basso e l'mediocre stile,
E ne' marmi l'imagin ricca e vile,
Secondo che 'l sa trar l'ingenio nostro—

As in pen and ink is the high and the low and the middle style, and as in marble the image rich or mean according as our genius is able to extract it.

There is the almost Shakespearean conceit in

While the Cock with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin

—scatters, that is, like a routed army the last thin wreaths of dark mist that linger after sunrise. The praise of Melancholy's blackness in *Il Penseroso* has something, if only a little, in common with many paradoxical praises of dark or "black" beauty by seventeenth-century poets[1], and even with Donnes's praise (greatly wanting in propriety and *decorum* though, for the most part, it is) of the "autumnal" beauty of Mrs. Herbert:

Hail divinest Melancholy,
Whose Saintly visage is too bright
To hit the Sense of human sight;
And therefore to our weaker view
Ore laid with black staid Wisdoms hue.
Black, but such as in esteem,
Prince *Memnons* sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd *Ethiope* Queen that strove
To set her beauties praise above
The Sea Nymphs, and their powers offended.

One may also, perhaps, recall one of the items in Sir Thomas Browne's "Musaeum Clausum", that imaginary and characteristic descriptive catalogue of "some remarkable Books, Antiquities, Pictures and Rarities of several kinds, scarce or never seen by any man now living":

a fair English Lady drawn *Al Negro,* or in the Aethiopian hue excelling the original White and Red Beauty, with this Subscription,

sed quandam volo nocte Nigriorem.[2]

[1] e.g. Walton Poole's *On Black Hayre and Eyes* (Grierson's *Donne,* I, 460), *On his Black Mistress* in *Wits Interpreter,* 1655, 76.

[2] *Works,* ed. Sayle, III, 359.

In his later exhortation to Melancholy,

> There held in holy passion still,
> Forget thy self to Marble,

Milton is using in what one might almost call a normal and Petrarchan manner a conceit which seems ultimately to derive from Petrarch's declaration, in sonnet *cxxxi*, that the pure ivory of Laura's face turns to marble whoever gazes at it from anear. Thomas Tomkyns, in a comedy acted before King James at Trinity College Cambridge, used this conceit in the simple Petrarchan manner when he made a character exclaim:

> Marvaile thy selfe to Marble at these engines;[1]

but William Browne exercised his ingenuity upon it, and in the second stanza of his Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke declared that grief would transform some future reader of his lines not merely into a marble statue but into a marble tomb; and Milton himself, in his lines on Shakespeare, had been still more elaborately ingenious when he declared that Shakespeare possessed in his readers an everlasting funeral monument, or rather, forest of monuments, since admiration for him transformed each of them into the likeness of a marble statue, within which, as in a marble tomb, his lines were buried. By the time he came to write *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* Milton had left this kind of extravagance behind him. In comparison with that of many of his contemporaries, his wit is now as unextravagant, as decorous, as Pope's, when (no doubt with this passage in *Il Penseroso* in mind) he makes Eloisa exclaim

> Tho' cold like you, unmov'd, and silent grown,
> I have not yet forgot my self to stone.

In every one of these passages the wit, the ingenuity, is strictly subordinated to the purpose of illuminating or sharpening the particular delight Milton is evoking, just as each delight is dwelt upon not a line longer than his conception of his subject and the plan of his poem require. We never feel that any of these not very extreme examples of ingenuity is there merely *because* it is ingenious. Indeed, the strict *decorum* which in these two poems Milton observes even in his wit seems to me one of the strongest arguments for assuming that they were written during the Horton period, for several times in his Cambridge poems we find him elaborating conceits in the inappropriate and indecorous manner of his academic contemporaries.

[1] *Albumazar*, l. 325.

IV

In the introduction to *Il Penseroso*, which is largely an appropriation and transformation of phrases in the description of the Cave of Sleep in Sylvester's *Du Bartas*, one might regard 'The fickle Pensioners of *Morpheus* train' as a conceit. Elizabeth, like Henry VIII, had a bodyguard of tall, handsome young men called pensioners, to whom Mrs. Quickly alludes in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (II. ii, 79): "And yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners". The only figurative use of the word before Milton recorded by the Oxford Dictionary is in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (II. i, 10): 'The cowslips tall her pensioners be'. This is by no means the only place in these two poems where Milton is indebted to "sweetest *Shakespear* fancies childe". The "fresh-blown Roses washt in dew" at the beginning of *L'Allegro* were almost certainly suggested by Petruchio's

> Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
> As morning roses newly wash'd with dew

in *The Taming of the Shrew* (II. i, 173–4). The "dappled dawn" in l. 44 was probably suggested by

> And look! the gentle day
> Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray

in *Much Ado About Nothing* (V. iii, 25); and the "nibling flocks" in l. 72 by "The turfy mountains where live nibbling sheep" in *The Tempest* (IV. i, 62). The "Chequer'd shade" in "Dancing in the Chequer'd shade" almost certainly owes something to the lines which so incongruously appear in Queen Tamora's seductive speech to Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus* (II. iii, 14–15):

> The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind
> And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground.

Only twice more did Shakespeare use the verb *chequer*, and then still only in its participial forms: the present participle in *Romeo and Juliet* (II. iii, 2), "Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light", and the past participle once again, this time in a context with which numerous contemporary parallels could be produced, in *Venus and Adonis* (l. 1168), "A purple flower sprang up, chequer'd with white". He was, I think, the

first to describe, and perhaps also, in what might be called the Wordsworthian sense, to notice, the pattern made by sunlight and shadow on the grass beneath trees. Of the many writers who have described it since, most, I believe, consciously or unconsciously, have used the word which he used, which Milton used after him, and which Pope used in *Windsor Forest*:

> Here waving groves a chequer'd scene display,
> And part admit, and part exclude the day.

How many later poets Shakespeare taught not merely to write but to see! Of the following lines in *Il Penseroso*,

> Far from all resort of mirth,
> Save the Cricket on the hearth,

Warton remarked that

> Shakespeare, the universal and accurate observer of real Nature, was the first who introduced the crying of the cricket, and with the finest effect, into poetry.

He was thinking of a famous scene in *Macbeth*:

> "I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a voice?"
> "I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry."

Dr. Johnson said of Milton:

> He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, *through the spectacles of books*; and on most occasions calls learning to his assistance.

However that may be, it is certainly true that when in these poems there appears in Milton's precise evocations (evocations rather than descriptions) some more than usually arresting detail, it will often be found that he is looking at nature through the eyes and through the language of Shakespeare.

There is, though, at least one example of what Wordsworth would have called a new image from external nature for which Milton does not seem to have been indebted either to Shakespeare or to anyone else—in that passage where he declares that, after one of his studious vigils, he would have dawn ushered in with a shower,

> Ending on the russling Leaves,
> With minute drops from off the Eaves.

"Minute drops", drops, that is to say, falling at intervals of a minute, a phrase formed on the analogy of minute-gun, minute-bell, and so forth, is a precise expression of a hitherto unrecorded phenomenon which is not unworthy of the wild woodnote warbler himself. (That famous phrase, by the way, seems, as Todd observed, to be a free translation of one in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*—vii, 6—where Erminia hears a sound

> di pastorali accenti
> Misto, e di boscareccie inculte avene

> commingled
> Of shepherd accents and rude woodland reeds).

"Minute drops", both as a phrase and as an observation, is original, although it is possible that in admitting into his catalogue of delights that of listening to the sound of rain upon one's roof Milton may, as Todd suggested, have been remembering a fragment of Sophocles quoted by Cicero in one of his letters to Atticus (II. vii):

> I had grown weary of piloting the state even while I was allowed to do so. Now, though, that I have been turned out of the boat, and have not abandoned the tiller but had it snatched out of my hands, my desire is to watch their shipwreck from the shore; my desire, as your friend Sophocles says, is

> beneath my roof
> To hear with drowsing mind the frequent drop.[1]

But to return to Shakespeare: Milton, like so many of his predecessors and contemporaries, was indebted to him not merely for new images from external nature but for his fairy-lore. In his notes on the passage in *L'Allegro* about Mab and Robin Goodfellow, Warton prefaces his numerous illustrations with the remark that "All this is a part of the pastoral imagery which now prevailed in our poetry." He might have added that it was a part which came to prevail through the example of Shakespeare, for Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* seems to have been the first to exploit the poetic possibilities of popular superstition, seems, in fact, to have started a new fashion, in which he was soon followed by Ben Jonson (*The Satyr*, 1603), William Browne, Drayton (*Nimphidia*), Herrick ('Oberon's Chapel', 'Oberon's Feast', 'Oberon's Palace', etc.), and many others.

This, though, is by no means the end of Milton's indebtedness to Shakespeare, both here and elsewhere. Shakespeare taught him not

[1] *πυκνᾶς ἀκούειν ψεκάδος εὐδούσῃ φρενί.*

merely to see but to say, and even in passages of a much more general and figurative kind we often find him appropriating Shakespeare's diction—almost, I might say, his "poetic diction".

Milton's indebtedness to Shakespeare's diction is sometimes direct and sometimes indirect: sometimes, that is, he appropriates Shakespearean phrases without, or with only slight, modification; sometimes, especially in personifications, he uses phrases and images which, although one cannot positively assert that they *must* have been suggested by particular passages in Shakespeare, are yet throroughly Shakespearean and without Shakespeare's example would almost certainly have been different. "Weeds of Peace" in *L'Allegro*,

> Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,
> In weeds of Peace high triumphs hold,

is from *Troilus and Cressida* (III. iii, 239): "To see great Hector in his weeds of peace." "Hit the Sense" in *Il Penseroso*,

> Whose Saintly visage is too bright
> To hit the Sense of human sight,

is from *Antony and Cleopatra* (II. iii, 216–7):

> From the barge
> A strange invisible perfume hits the sense.

"Civil-suited Morn" in *Il Penseroso* is almost certainly a re-combination of epithets which Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* (IV. ii, 10–11) had applied to night:

> Come, civil night,
> Thou sober-suited matron, all in black.

But Milton was also, I think, though less directly, indebted to that same speech of Juliet's, as well as to the general imagery of the play, when in *Il Penseroso* he wrote of Philomel

> Smoothing the rugged brow of night.

He was also very probably, and, at first sight, more deeply indebted, as Todd suggested, to some lines in Spenser's sonnet to Sir Christopher Hatton, prefixed to *The Faerie Queene*:

> So you, great Lord, that with your counsell sway
> The burdeine of this kingdom mightily,
> With like delightes sometimes may eke delay
> The rugged brow of carefull Policy,

where the obsolete verb *delay* (derived, unlike the verb meaning "retard", "defer", from *dis-ligare*, unbind) means to smooth. Nevertheless, although the diction here is partly Spenserian, it is also partly Shakespearean, and the image itself is as characteristically Shakespearean as that in Comus's description of the Lady's singing:

> How sweetly did they float upon the wings
> Of Silence, through the empty-vaulted night
> At every fall smoothing the Raven doune
> Of darkness till it smil'd—

a passage where, as Miss Ethel Seaton has lately demonstrated, "from many lines and images in *Romeo and Juliet* Milton has woven a fresh pattern of meaning and melody."[1]

There are at least three other places in these poems where Milton seems to have combined the diction of Shakespeare with that of other Elizabethans.

> Com, and trip it as you go
> On the light fantastick toe

—in these lines it is hard not to suppose that the phrase "Come, and trip it" and the rhyme "go—toe" are recollections, or even deliberate imitations, of Ariel's

> Before you can say "come" and "go"
> And breathe twice and cry "so, so",
> Each one, tripping on his toe,
> Will be here with mop and mow,

just as it is also hard not to suppose that the combination "light fantastick", both here and in *Comus*,

> Com, knit hands, and beat the ground,
> In a light fantastick round,

was not remembered, or imitated, from Drayton's *Nimphidia*, "My pretty light fantastick maid." Similarly, in the "Meadows trim with Daisies pide" of *L'Allegro*, it would surely have been impossible for Milton or any other poet to write of "Daisies pide" without reminding his readers of Shakespeare's famous song, even if the phrase had occurred to him quite sponstaneously; nevertheless, it is interesting to learn from Todd that the phrase "trim meadow" actually occurs in Bartholomew Yong's translation of Boccaccio's *Amorous Fiametta* (1587): "I went singing vp and downe in this pleasant and trym meadowe", and it is difficult to suppose that *both* phrases could have come to Milton, as

[1] "*Comus* and Shakespeare", in *Essays and Studies* XXXI, (1945), p. 70.

children say, "out of his own head". In "Hide me from Day's garish eie" Milton seems to have been recollecting both Juliet's exclamation that the "starred" Romeo

> will make the face of heaven so fine
> That all the world will be in love with night,
> And pay no worship to the garish sun

and, as Todd suggested, the phrase "a woman's garish eye" from Barnaby Riche's *Adventures of Simonides* (1584). (Examples of such phrases as "the great eye of heaven", "the heaven's bright eye", "day's glorious eye" in Spenser, the Elizabethan Song-Books, Drayton, Browne, Shakespeare, Sylvester, etc., are too numerous to mention).

V

For both here and elsewhere Milton reveals a very considerable indebtedness, not merely to the diction of Shakespeare, but to that of many other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets, some of them very minor ones. Some of his most memorable phrases are often appropriations, with certain additions and modifications of his own, of what were almost *clichés*. Examples are so numerous that it is hard to suppose that it can have been a matter of mere memory, conscious or unconscious. Milton's "industrious and select reading" embraced, one must assume, English as well as classical and Italian poets, and almost certainly demanded the companionship of a notebook (would it had been preserved!) into which he copied any passage or phrase, any "elegances or flowers of speech", which happened to take his fancy and of which he felt that he might at some time be able to make good use himself. He had been taught to write Latin verse with the aid of a *Gradus* and a *Flores Poetarum*, and even after he had become able to dispense with such aids he remained continuously careful of Virgilian and Ovidian precedent. When he turned to English poetry he wrote it on, so to speak, the same principles as those on which he had written his Latin poetry. He sometimes complied with the contemporary academic taste for the ingenious comparison, but it would no more have occurred to him to cultivate in his English poetry that out-of-one's-own-head kind of originality which Carew praised in Donne than it would have occurred to him to try to write Latin poetry as though no one had ever written it before. The only difference was that, while in Latin poetry, "best example"

was not a matter of dispute, in English poetry it was a matter upon which Milton had to decide.

As an example of what I mean by the appropriation and transformation (whether by addition, modification, or context) of phrases that were almost *clichés*, I will mention *L'Allegro*'s "bucksom, blith, and debonair". That *buxom* and *blithe* had been keeping company for some considerable time is suggested by their appearance in the slightly ludicrous context of Gower's Prologue to the first act of *Pericles*:

> This king unto him took a fere,
> Who died and left a female heir,
> So buxom, blithe, and full of face,
> As heaven had lent her all his grace.

It also seems possible that *buxom* and *debonair* may long have been accustomed to hunt in couples, for in James Bell's *Answer Apologetical to Hierome Osorius*, 1581 (quoted by *O.E.D.*) we find: "The Consuls should . . . sweare faythfully to become bonnaire and buxome to the Pope", although it is true that *buxom* is here used in the more restricted sense of "obedient". At any rate, when Milton's Cambridge contemporary, Thomas Randolph of Trinity, writes in his comedy of *Aristippus* (1630)

> A bowl of wine is wondrous boon cheer,
> To make one blithe, buxome, and deboneer,

it does not seem absolutely necessary to assume that either he must have been borrowing from Milton or Milton from him. If one of them was borrowing, it is rather more likely to have been Milton, who, as his manner was, had entered the phrase in his notebook; but it seems possible that each of them, quite independently, was, as it were, telescoping two time-hallowed and traditional phrases. The point is, though, that but for Milton the phrase (or combination of two phrases), however often it had been used by earlier poets, would have died a natural death. The mere words themselves might well have appeared together in a line in one of those painfully undistinguished poems in Poulter's Measure which make up the greater part of *Tottel's Miscellany*, and there they would have been as unlikely to arrest the attention of any but philologists or lexicographers as in the line from Randolph's *Aristippus*. Milton, by means of context and rhythm, has conferred upon them a modest immortality: in their place in his poem they have struck, and will long continue to strike, most readers as being exquisitely original and right.

One might say almost the same of

> Com pensive Nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, steadfast, and demure.

The combination "sober and demure" seems to have been almost as much of a fixed phrase as were "fair and free" and the like in those metrical romances parodied by Chaucer in "Sir Thopas": in Skelton's "Philip Sparrow" we have

> Goodly Mistress Jane,
> Sober, demure Diane[1];

in the old *Chronicle History of King Leir* Ragan says of Cordella:

> Besides, she is so nice and so demure;
> So sober, courteous, modest, and precise;[2]

and in the Catholic devotional manual *Partheneia Sacra* (1633, p. 209) occurs the invocation "most sober and demure Virgin". Here again by means of rhythm and context Milton has transmuted copper currency into gold. And when I say "by means of context", I mean very largely that, because of the extreme economy and *decorum* which Milton observes in these two poems, every detail receives the maximum emphasis and produces the maximum effect: everything stands out clearly, nothing gets lost in the crowd.

The line "Nods, and Becks, and Wreathed Smiles," which has probably struck most readers as delightfully original (as indeed, in the most valuable sense, it is), seems to have been compounded from a ballad-like translation of a passage from Musaeus's *Hero and Leander* in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*:

> With becks and nods, he first beganne
> To try the wenches minde,
> With becks and nods and smiles againe,
> An answere he did finde.[3]

The exquisite use of the verb *ride* in

> To behold the wandring Moon,
> Riding near her highest noon,

may well have been inspired, as Todd suggested, by a passage in Archbishop Parker's translation of *The Whole Psalter* (?1567, p. 199):

[1] *Poems*, ed. Philip Henderson, p. 95.
[2] ed. Sidney Lee, I. ii, 9–10.
[3] Part. 3, Sect. 2, Memb. 2. Subs. 4 (Allurements of Loue), ed. 1621, p. 583.

Sweet peace shalbe on every side,
As long as moone her sphere doth ryde.[1]

Poets who had used such phrases before him did not, one might say, know what to do with them; they fumbled, they dropped their catches. Milton picked them up, and phrases which might otherwise have quietly disappeared from the language are now among the most memorable in these two poems—or rather, perhaps I should say, as memorable as any, since the distinction of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* is that nearly all their phrases are memorable. Nowhere do we find such striking confirmation of that hard saying:

> Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

VI

At least twice in these poems not just a phrase or a metaphor but an extended passage seems to have been suggested to Milton by something he had remembered (or transcribed into his notebook) from earlier poets. In *Britannia's Pastorals* (1616) William Browne, with a touch of epigrammatic wit, had written of Spenser:

He sung the heroicke knights of fairery land
In lines so eloquent, of such command;
That had the Thracian plaid but half so well
He had not left Eurydice in Hell (II. i, 991–4).

It was perhaps the possibility he saw of exquisitely refining and pointing this touch of epigrammatic wit which led Milton to bring Orpheus and Eurydice into the last lines of *L'Allegro*, and to express the wish that from the marriage of Lydian airs and immortal verse he might hear such strains as would move even Orpheus in Elysium to listen

and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of *Pluto*, to have quite set free
His half regain'd *Eurydice*.

[1 Cf. also *P.L.*, I, 796: "In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides". *O.E.D.* quotes no earlier examples of the application of the verb to the heavenly bodies: its later examples all seem to have been imitated from Milton.

Nowhere else in these poems is Milton's power of compressed statement so brilliantly and astonishingly revealed as in the last two lines of this passage. "Quite set free"—that is, without any conditions, since, as it was, Orpheus only "half-regained" her, regained her subject to the condition of not looking back until they had reached the upper world.[1] The monosyllables "quite" and "half" are not only unimprovably and magisterially right, but each is so placed in its line that it receives the maximum emphasis and performs the maximum amount of work. One might almost say that the "wit" which so many of his contemporaries expended upon the devising of ingenious similes, Milton came more and more to spend upon the rightness and economy of his choice of words. Most of the poets he borrowed from habitually used far too many words, and when they did hit upon a good phrase or a good idea its potential energy was nearly always damped or dissipated by an undistinguished context.

The other example of such extended imitation (or transmutation) is less remarkable. Drayton had written in *The Owle* (1604 and 1619, ll. 117–21),

> See the small brookes as through their Groves they travell . . .
> With the smooth cadence of their murmuring.
> Each Bee with Honey on her laden thye.

It was almost certainly with these lines in his memory (or in his notebook) that Milton begged Melancholy to hide him from day's garish eye by some shady brook,

> While the Bee with Honied thie,
> That at her flowry work doth sing,
> And the Waters murmuring
> With such consort as they keep,
> Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep[2]

"Flowry work" is the translation of a phrase (*laboris floriferi*) from Lucan's *Pharsalia* (ix, 289–90), in a description of how bees, at the sound of beaten brass,

[1] Milton then reintroduced Orpheus and Eurydice into what may be called the corresponding place in *Il Penseroso*, ll. 105–8.

[2] "Dewy-feather'd" is but one of the dozens of compound epithets scattered through his shorter poems which Milton seems to have coined. Both Spenser and Shakespeare use a fair number of such epithets, and Sidney abounds with them, both in the *Arcadia* and in his poems. Milton, like Sidney, seems to have been deliberately trying to introduce into English one of the beauties of Greek.

Attonitae posuere fugam, studiumque laboris
Floriferi repetunt et sparsi mellis amorem.

In his translation (1627) Thomas May rendered it as "flow'ry taskes", a phrase which Milton may possibly have remembered and improved upon. Such periphrases—"watery plain", "heavenly round", "finny tribe", "feathered choir", etc.—which are still popularly supposed to constitute almost the sum total of "poetic diction" and to have been introduced by Pope, are very numerous in the work of the seventeenth-century translators, from Sylvester's *Du Bartas* onwards. They are generally translations of more or less equivalent Latin phrases, but where he speaks in *L'Allegro* of the lubber fiend's "hairy strength", Milton seems to have coined one of his own.

But just as such periphrases constitute only a small and rather specialised portion of what may properly be called poetic diction, they also constitute only a small portion of Milton's Latinisms, of those phrases which he has either adapted directly from Latin authors or into which, although they had been used by his English predecessors, he has re-injected some of their original virtue. There are two very notable examples in four consecutive lines of *L'Allegro*:

And ever against eating Cares,
Lap me in soft *Lydian* Aires,
Married to immortal verse
Such as the meeting soul may pierce.

"Eating cares" is a translation of the phrase *edaces curae*, which occurs several times in Horace's Odes, e.g., II, xi: 'Dissipat Euhius curas edaces'. "Meeting", in the phrase "meeting soul", is an anglicization of Latin *obvius*, in the sense of "coming forward in response or welcome", as in Virgil, *Aeneid* I, 314, 'cui mater media sese tulit obvia silva,' "to whom in the midst of the forest rose meetingly his mother". The only pre-Miltonic example cited by *O.E.D.* is from Udall's translation of Erasmus's *Paraphrase upon the First Epistle to Timothy*, 1548, where the phrase *obviis, ut aiunt, ulnis amplectendum* is rendered "to be embraced (as they saye) with meeting armes". Nevertheless, it would seem that by Milton's time the word had become, and for some time remained, quite current English: Saltmarshe, 1639, has "Be not too meeting, and seem not too hasty in accepting graces and favours", and South in a sermon speaks of "all the meeting readiness of appetite and desire". Dr. Johnson declared that both in prose and verse Milton had "formed his style by a

perverse and pedantick principle", and that he was "desirous to use English words with a foreign idiom"; very often, though, investigation will reveal that what seems Latin or "foreign" idiom now was good English idiom at the time when Milton wrote, although it is true that, by means of context and emphasis, he not infrequently injected into such Latinate phrases a new dose of thir original virtue. "Decent" in *Il Penseroso* is an excellent example:

> And sable stole of *Cipres* Lawn
> Over thy decent shoulders drawn.

Latin *decens* means either "seemly" or "becoming", sometimes both, and the word "decent" was similarly used by Milton's predecessors and contemporaries. Here, though, by means of context and emphasis, he has contrived to give it a depth of meaning such as Horace often achieves: Odes III, xxviii (Europa speaking): "antequam turpis macies decentis / occupet malas" ("Before hideous wasting seizes upon my comely cheeks"); or I, iv: "iunctaeque Nymphis Gratiae decentes"; or IV, i: "namque et nobilis et decens" ("a youth noble and comely"); or IV, xiii: "quo fugit Venus, heu, quove color? decens / quo motus?" ("Whither, alas, has fled thy grace, whither thy bloom? Whither thy decent carriage?") Collins, undoubtedly imitating Milton, used the same word to achieve precisely the same effect in the "Ode to Simplicity" (where he has also borrowed the phrase "meeting soul"):

> Thou, who with Hermit Heart
> Disdain'st the Wealth of Art,
> And Gauds, and pageant Weeds, and trailing Pall:
> But com'st a decent Maid
> In *Attic* Robe array'd,
> O chaste unboastful Nymph, to Thee I call!

Neither here nor elsewhere in these two poems is there anything perverse or pedantic, odd or eccentric, startling or stunning about Milton's "originality", which in almost every one of its manifestations consists simply in doing better, more economically, more tellingly, things which other poets had done, or had tried to do, before. All his materials, one might almost say, lay ready to his hand, and his whole art and power consists in his judicious selection and combination of them. The observance of *decorum*, the subordination of the parts to the whole, the placing of words in a line, of lines in a passage, of passages in a poem—nowhere, perhaps, is that sheer craftsmanship which is the foundation of

all great poetry so apparent as in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Almost everything that is commonly understood by "originality", almost everything that Carew meant when he praised the originality of Donne, is missing: Milton's originality in these two poems consists almost entirely in his manipulation and craftsmanship—in his style, which, "by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live".

II

RASSELAS RECONSIDERED

by MARY LASCELLES

"To a lady, who signified [to Johnson] a great desire to increase her acquaintance with authors, conceiving that more might be learned from their conversation and manner of living, than from their works—— 'Madam,' said he, 'the best part of an author will always be found in his writings'." So Hawkins reports.[1] That succeeding generations have sided with the lady against Johnson is surely indisputable, so far as Johnson himself is concerned. And, even when we deliberately disengage ourselves from the incomparable record of his "conversation and manner of living", are we not apt to confine our attention to a few established favourites among his works, leaving the rest in Limbo?

Rasselas has lain there for a long while. On its first appearance, Mrs. Chapone spoke her mind about it; and in the declaration of a plain-spoken eighteenth-century lady we may sometimes discern thoughts that other thinkers—less stupid, perhaps; certainly less candid—have scrupled to utter. "Do for once give your judgment fair play against the man's name," she writes to Mrs. Carter, "and tell me whether you do not think he ought to be ashamed of publishing such an ill-contrived, unfinished, unnatural and uninstructive tale?" Its moral implications particularly offend her: "I think the only maxim one can deduce from the story is, that human life is a scene of unmixt wretchedness, and that all states and conditions of it are equally miserable; a maxim which, if adopted, would extinguish hope, and consequently industry, make prudence ridiculous, and, in short, dispose men to lie down in sloth and despondency." And she is "scandalized above measure" at the final return to the outworn pleasures of the happy valley—for so she interprets the concluding words.[2]

Mrs. Chapone was not quite alone in her opinion. Indeed, her point of view, and that more edifying conclusion to *Rasselas* for which she vainly looked, are alike exemplified in the *Dinarbas* of Miss Knight,

[1] *Life*, 2nd edition (1787), p. 410.

[2] *Posthumous Works* (1807) I, 108—110.

published some thirty years later.[1] Here is reward according to desert; here, "conscious merit"; here, those maxims of prudence and piety in which the reader may find means of self-improvement: "There is no profession in which a man may not be virtuous and respected: the fault lies not in the state of life, it depends on the manner of acting."[2] In so far as these aspersions, the direct and the oblique, may be supposed to represent eighteenth-century opinion, *Rasselas* seems hardly to have obtained even the "success of esteem" which was all that Raleigh claimed for it. They are, of course, not representative. Nevertheless, the encomium of Hawkins (for example) is oddly mixed: "Considered as a specimen of our language, it is scarcely to be paralleled; it is written in a style refined to a degree of immaculate purity, and displays the whole force of turgid eloquence." But the substance has little to commend it: "I wish I were not warranted in saying, that this elegant work is rendered, by its most obvious moral, of little benefit to the reader." Only the circumstances in which it was composed can excuse its general tenor.[3] Murphy's criticism, though more happily expressed, sustains this contrast between the manner, which can be admired, and the substance, which must be regretted:

> It is remarkable that the vanity of human pursuits was, about the same time, the subject that employed both Johnson and Voltaire; but *Candide* is the work of a lively imagination; and *Rasselas,* with all its splendour of eloquence, exhibits a gloomy picture.[4]

Even Boswell qualifies his tribute with the doubt whether Johnson's constitutional melancholy may not here override his sagacity.[5] It was no wonder that, when the tide turned, the next generation was disposed to reject so "debilitating [a] moral speculation"[6] outright. Scott's reaction is significant—far more telling than that of a willing detractor: committed to a critical account of *Rasselas,*[7] he veers, drags his anchor, and runs for the lee of a favourite passage in *The Vanity of Human Wishes,*

[1] Ellis Cornelia Knight, *Dinarbas; A Tale: being a Continuation of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* (1790).

[2] p. 15.

[3] pp. 368, 371.

[4] *Essay* (1792), p. 165.

[5] *Life* (Hill-Powell), I, 343.

[6] Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (*Works,* ed. Howe, 1930–4, VI, 102).

[7] *Miscellaneous Prose Works* (1834), III, 264 ff.

a poem for which he cherished a life-long affection.[1] Where he could not praise, he would not scrutinize; and it is clear that he could not praise *Rasselas*.

Is the grave tenor of *Rasselas* the true and sole cause of this dismay? The occasion of composition was indeed melancholy: contemporary references agree in associating it with the death of Johnson's mother. The evidence is closely examined in the Introduction to Dr. Chapman's edition,[2] which establishes Boswell's well-known account of the circumstances as substantially true:

> The late Mr. Strahan the printer told me, that Johnson wrote it, that with the profits he might defray the expence of his mother's funeral,[3] and pay some little debts which she had left. He told Sir Joshuah Reynolds that he composed it in the evenings of one week,[4] sent it to the press in portions as it was written, and had never since read it over.[5]

Rasselas, then, was a task to be performed. It sometimes happens to an author, however, to find that he has *written himself into* a piece of task-work: has discovered, in what he has perforce undertaken, opportunities which were not at the outset present to his unwilling attention. I believe that the "little story book" which Johnson promised Lucy Porter on 23 March 1759, and which issued from the press on Thursday 19 April, may witness to some such experience. Hawkins gives a bleak enough account of the considerations determining Johnson's choice of direction:

> The fact, respecting the writing and publishing the story of Rasselas is, that finding the Eastern Tales written by himself in the Rambler, and by Hawkesworth in the Adventurer, had been well received, he had been for some time meditating a fictitious history, of a greater extent than any that had appeared in either of those papers, which might serve as a vehicle to convey to the world his sentiments of human life and the dispensations of Providence, and having digested his thoughts on the subject, he obeyed the spur of that necessity which

[1] Lockhart, chapter xx.

[2] *Rasselas*, ed. R. W. Chapman, 1927. All quotations are taken from this edition.

[3] Mrs. Piozzi, Hawkins and Murphy agree that money was needed for some purpose connected with his mother's death, and disagree merely in detail.

[4] Mrs. Chapone had heard "three mornings"!

[5] *Life*, I, 341. Dr. Chapman points out that we are to accept this with such minor reservations as, that not all of the work was necessarily sent to the printer piecemeal; and, that Johnson included in his recollection of the writing of *Rasselas* a revision of the text for the second edition, which appeared but two months after the first.

> now pressed him, and sat down to compose the tale abovementioned, laying the scene of it in a country that he had before occasion to contemplate, in his translation of Padre Lobo's voyage.[1]

Was this, indeed, all that the notion of an Abyssinian tale signified to Johnson's preoccupied mind, or have we here no more than a half-truth, casting as much shadow as light on the subject?

The editor of the present volume has pointed out the *Persian Tales* as a possible factor in the situation,[2] but I find myself unable to accept this suggestion even with such reservations as he himself proposes. The *Mille et un Jours* of Pétis de la Croix, which Ambrose Philips translated,[3] flicker and twinkle with a polite French irony alien to *Rasselas*, and to its author; Johnson's irony was never polite. The tale of Bedreddin Lolo cited by Professor Tillotson as bearing some relation to Rasselas's quest of happiness appears indeed to be held together by the king's quest for a man who will admit that he is happy; but it is composed of a succession of romantic reversals of fortune, following no other rule than that which the story-teller in the market-place must observe: variety. When the king comments slily, at the close of one of these tales of extraordinary vicissitudes—"Tout le monde n'a pas perdu comme vous une princesse"—we are surely nearer to *Candide* than to *Rasselas*. Grant that, for the eighteenth-century reader, "Persian Tale" spells entertainment—Johnson himself epitomized Goldsmith's power to please in the remark that he would make his Natural History "as entertaining as a Persian Tale"[4]—and you have, I believe, all that Pétis de la Croix stands for, in the development of *Rasselas*.

Pleasure was not the sole train of association carried by this literary convention. Since Addison's time, it had served a variety of didactic purposes, traversing the polite world easily with its light burden of ideas—very much as Joseph Emin ("as good and as oriental as ever") traversed the world familiar to Catharine Talbot, expatiating on "the management of states and kingdoms", and recounting "Eastern tales and poems, as he had heard them repeated by some Persians he travelled with, when they sat down to pass the heat of the day on the banks of a river."[5] And a

[1] p. 367.

[2] Geoffrey Tillotson, *Essays in Criticism and Research* (1942), '*Rasselas* and *The Persian Tales*.'

[3] Johnson's reference to this translation, in his life of Philips, betrays no particular interest.

[4] *Life*, II, 237.

[5] Elizabeth Carter, *A Series of Letters*, ed. M. Pennington (1808), I, 441.

more deeply rooted tradition, regarding the character and intention of such tales, had lately been revived. When Gibbon drily remarks, of his former tutor's romance, *Automathes*,[1] that it "aspires to the honours of a philosophical fiction",[2] he wakes the echoes in a wide valley. The story of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, written by Abu Bakr Ibn al Tufail in Muhammadan Spain of the twelfth century, is beyond the scope of this essay (as of the writer's capacity); but the descendants of this work, in England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, cannot be ignored. Briefly, the tale is an allegory of the attainment of a purer religious apprehension—more mystical and more philosophical than that attained in the common traffic of mankind—by a boy reared in solitude on an island, who, when he brings word of this apprehension to his fellow men, finds them incapable of receiving it. The Arabic original was translated into Latin by the younger Edward Pococke, son of the great Oxford orientalist, in 1671,[3] and thereby set in motion a train of versions and imitations. From Pococke's Latin, two English versions were made before the end of the seventeenth century;[4] and these in their turn provoked the Cambridge orientalist, Simon Ockley, to translate afresh from the Arabic,[5] and to accompany his translation with a warning against the interpretation of the allegory by the Quakers, "who imagin'd that there was something in it that favoured their Enthusiastick Notions."[6] From one of these versions, or an abridgement, John Kirkby drew much of the substance of his romance. This purported to be a manuscript account (washed up on the Cumberland coast) of the experience of an English Benedictine priest, expelled from Japan and shipwrecked on the shore of an earthly paradise. Here he encounters one Automathes, who, as a boy, had been reared in the same manner as Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, remote from human beings but fostered by kindly creatures. Unlike his original, however, he has been recovered by his father, at the age of nineteen, speechless indeed, but (as to his state of mind) "more like a polished Christian, than an ignorant Savage."[7] Now, in Kirkby's romance the

[1] John Kirkby, *The Capacity and Extent of the Human Understanding exemplified in the Extraordinary Case of Automathes* (1745).

[2] *Memoirs*, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (1900), p. 33.

[3] *Philosophus Autodidactus*. The Arabic text, with an introduction by the elder Edward Pococke and translation by the younger.

[4] By George Keith (1674), and George Ashwell (1686).

[5] *The Improvement of Human Reason* (1708, reprinted 1711).

[6] The second page of 'The Preface'.

[7] pp. 76, 77.

attraction which this allegory held for eighteenth-century readers can be clearly descried: it spoke directly to their curiosity regarding man's inherent powers, and it could be adapted to express some of their favourite trains of speculation as to the noble savage and the life according to nature.[1]

Whether Johnson was acquainted with this story in any form, I have not been able to ascertain; but his dispersed reading makes such acquaintance appear by no means impossible. Adaptations of it, deistical in tendency, would have pleased him no better than they had Simon Ockley:[2] it is surely significant that he should set *his* story in Abyssinia, where—as his recollection of Lobo's *Voyage* would assure him—he might refer indirectly to Christianity as already known, and disembarrass himself of surmise as to religion without revelation.[3] The original tale, however, in Pococke's plain translation, establishes its own world, and informs it with some of that "sentiment" which Johnson found wanting in the "oriental fictions and allegorical imagery" of his friend Collins.[4]

In effect, the "eastern tale" had more to offer to the imagination and taste of the eighteenth century than we can easily grasp. It gave occasion for idealization in the grand manner—the manner recommended in Reynolds's *Discourses*—and this is now an almost forgotten language. Moreover, when it would abstract this ideal grandeur, it could command a field of reference more widely and simply acceptable to that generation than to this. In Johnson's happy valley, there is surely a tacit allusion to the ideal beauty of Eden in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, the ideal energy and variety manifest in the whole creation, as related in the seventh book. Johnson could count on something like unanimity of response. To the writer, this convention of oriental fiction and allegory held out particular opportunities. It was well enough acclimatized to combine easily with social satire and admonition, for which it had sometimes afforded a transparent disguise.[5] Nevertheless, it was still sufficiently exotic to admit whatever departure from naturalism might best serve

[1] In particular, as to the connexion between thought and language.

[2] *Appendix*.

[3] Notice the references to Palestine and its significance (p. 55), and (less explicit) to the intention of the monastic rule (p. 208), and the expectation of a future life (pp. 123 and 219).

[4] *Lives*, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill, III, 338. Johnson here quotes from a *character* he had written of Collins not long after his death in 1759.

[5] Its happiest use, for disguise, lay in the near future, with Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*.

its purpose, moral or artistic; it enjoyed a freedom denied to the novel. Its characters could address one another without observing the set forms of civility prescribed by that ceremonious generation. (And how tedious these forms can become, in the too faithful reporting of Fanny Burney! They threaten the very life of the dialogue.) The writer was at liberty to invent a code of manners; the lofty courtesy between Rasselas and Nekayah, recalling the conversation of Adam and Eve before the Fall; the simplicity of access to those whom they would observe: "The laws of eastern hospitality allowed them to enter"[1]—what easier formula could any story-teller desire? Thus, eastern fiction spoke to the imagination of the eighteenth century in a language not unlike that which pastoral fiction had used to the Elizabethans. Each, in its own way, was free to simplify human relationships; either, mismanaged, was liable to reduce them to insipid uniformity; but the later convention had this advantage, that it was associated with no very august names, and might therefore be developed, alone or in conjunction with other literary conventions, by a writer who had the art of moving freely within traditional forms. To Johnson, who never troubled to invent new literary modes—he would probably have found them as uncomfortable as new clothes—it was thoroughly congenial.

Popular eastern fiction was episodic. This suited Johnson's inclination and circumstances. He was an improvisor: that is, his preparation for any undertaking was general, and had been made long beforehand; when the time came to entertain some new project, he drew on accumulated resources, and drew deepest when he wrote under pressure—as in the *Rambler* and *Rasselas*. Behind *Rasselas* lay his practice in the periodical essay: practice in illustrating his view of life and manners facet by facet. The episodes of a tale in which the principal characters move—without the urgency which an intricate plot must dictate—from one group of illustrative figures to another, need differ little from a succession of such essays. Contrariwise, *Idler* 75 might well be a tale told to the Prince by a new-comer to the happy valley; and *Rambler* 204 and 205 have been cited as "obviously an earlier draft of *Rasselas*",[2] because they tell how an Abyssinian prince sought happiness, in vain. Moreover, the periodical had maintained, ever since its Addisonian golden age, its own tradition of allegorical vision: an ample, leisurely, pictorial tradition, inviting the mind's eye to dwell on the symbolic landscape and the typical

[1] p. 90.

[2] M. P. Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (1908), p. 123.

figures that occupy it, until the forms of both assume a dream-like certitude. And here also an acknowledged alliance with oriental fable was of some standing.

Johnson liked, and needed, more room to turn in than a single periodical number allowed him. To *begin* anything was always an effort to him; in these papers, this initial difficulty is surmounted tardily; and indeed, nice proportioning of space and content must always be difficult for a man who writes under pressure, and without opportunity for revision. He had found comfortable room in that extended Addisonian allegory, *The Vision of Theodore, the Hermit of Teneriffe*. Here, in *Rasselas*, he obtained a still wider freedom, together with variety, by composing his story of two sorts of episode, corresponding with two types of periodical essay: that which levels particular criticism at observed phases of social life, and that which conveys general warning and exhortation obliquely, through representation of imagined states of being. And, whereas the essays forming a series in a periodical must be all of a length, these episodes vary both in bulk and density. The *mechanist*, who projects a flying machine, and the astronomer, who supposes himself to control the weather, are alike illustrative figures—but how differently they are handled!

Now, whether Johnson had any recollection of the fable of the boy reared in solitude, or whether *his* tale reflects only the mood to which that other spoke, he chooses for his observers of social life two characters who belong to the imaginary world of allegory, in that they are able to turn on all the familiar appearances of our world an innocent and curious gaze. And this freshness of apprehension he preserves untarnished by keeping them untouched by time, like the heroes and heroines of romance: Rasselas, by computation, has reached thirty-two before he is equipped for his enquiries, but neither in him nor in Nekayah is the first sense of wonder ever extinguished, and to the end Imlac treats them both as children. When Nekayah says that "youth reverences virtue",[1] she is speaking out of character: it should rather be Imlac's observation on his young companions.

In this peculiar conjunction of allegory and anecdote, Johnson found (I believe) the proper vehicle for what he wanted to convey. *Rasselas* expresses such a tension of contrarieties as no other medium could sustain. It urges, with equal cogency, the necessity, and the danger, of hope. For moderation in both, a *Rambler* paper could offer a sufficient

[1] p. 117. Cf. *Life*, I, 445: "Young men have more virtue than old men; they have more generous sentiments in every respect."

plea.[1] But for a stronger and subtler tension; for the presentation of contrary states of mind alike valid; for the annihilation of distinction between successive and simultaneous phases of experience—only this will serve. In Johnson's view of the human predicament, man, forbidden to despair, is bound for disappointment: he is forever dissatisfied because he must seek the satisfaction proper to his nature elsewhere, but what he is, here, forever hinders this search. Thus he becomes an inveterate gambler with hope—and, in matters of small moment, does well to divert and beguile his own restlessness.[2] But, in respect of graver concerns, this would be a dangerous frivolity; and yet, he dare scarcely reflect on the incapacity of his known self to receive the bounty on which he is dependent[3]; or listen to experience, when it insists that he cannot avail himself of what he most requires. It has been said that all the characters in *Rasselas* speak with Johnson's voice; and so they should; for it is not the diversity of several views that they were created to express, but the complexity inherent in one.

Narrative, however—especially such narrative as Johnson's age knew—customarily attains in the close at least a conventional resolution of discords. How are we to regard the conclusion of *Rasselas*, in which *nothing is concluded*? Does it reflect weariness and irresolution—the exhaustion of resources and inability to improvise further? Or does it express Johnson's considered opinion on the problem his story had posed?—And, if it does, by what name are we to call that opinion? Is it, after all, despair?

There can be no doubt as to the dejection in which *Rasselas* was written: disappointment was Johnson's prevailing mood in these years, and his mother's death did no more than deepen it. For the origin of this mood, circumstances, together with more questionable causes, have been alleged. It should not be forgotten, however, that disappointment must always be measured in terms of hope. Circumstances might still alter in his favour, but Johnson could never forget the older men—his father among them—who had expected a brilliant career for him, and were dead before his late, frost-bound spring came to answer their expectations. This theme—of success deferred until those to whom it was to be offered are out of reach of the offering—obstinately recurs in his writings, especially about this time. The best known expression of it

[1] e.g., numbers 2 and 29.

[2] "It is necessary to hope, though hope should always be deluded; for hope itself is happiness, and its frustrations, however frequent, are yet less dreadful than its extinction" (*Idler* 58).

[3] On schemes of self-improvement, Johnson in *Idler* 27 looks askance.

is the close of his *Preface* to the *Dictionary*: "I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds . . ." But the parallel between *Rambler* 165 and Imlac's account of his home-coming is equally significant. In both, a young man returns, full of his achievements in the world of letters, to his native place, only to find all those whom he had expected to astonish dead, or unmindful of him. Imlac certainly would seem to have been unlucky: he sets out as a very young man and, returning twenty years later, finds none to recognize him: "My father had been dead fourteen years . . . Of my companions the greater part was in the grave."[1] But a similar foreshortening appears in Rasselas's dissertation on the drawbacks of late marriages: the parents must "go out of the world before they see those whom they love best either wise or great."[2] Johnson's conscience was tender towards his parents. Moreover, melancholy in him was accompanied by its familiar associate, pride; and a proud young man accepts help in the confidence that he will be able, in due time, to show an ample return. The death of his mother was for Johnson an occasion not only of sorrow but also of self-reproach; and, like the deaths of his father and his wife, a token of faith betrayed.

Rasselas, however, is not merely a reflection of a personal experience; it is a deliberate challenge to false optimism. Here, the comparison with Voltaire's *Candide* is useful. Over more than one stretch of their journey, the two men are travelling the same road. Johnson's philosopher, who complacently recommended his pupils "to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity [and] to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things" would have enjoyed the society of Dr. Pangloss; but, in *Rasselas*, he is a mere illustration; when the Prince discovers him to be "one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer",[3] we turn the page and leave him behind. Likewise, Voltaire's episode of the sinking of the ship, which Candide takes for retribution on the man who has wronged him—"Oui, dit Martin; mais fallait-il que les passagers qui étaient sur son vaisseau périssent aussi?"—this is incidental; in *Rasselas* it would not have been so soon forgotten. For Voltaire's indignation against false systems[4]

[1] p. 60.

[2] p. 133.

[3] p. 100.

[4] Johnson's closest counterpart to this assault on a system comes two years earlier than *Rasselas* in his demolition of Soame Jenyns's *Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.*

occupies the centre of *Candide*, and is a judgment passed by the intellect. Johnson's condemnation of optimism gives central place to commonplaces of morality coldly felt; and it comes from his heart.

Rasselas challenged the assumption (easily formed in a prosperous age) that success is always distributed according to merit, and happiness is necessarily evidence of superior virtue. Johnson called this in question, not merely because his own experience did not tally with it, nor solely because it was unworthy of a thinking man. His compassionate heart was angered by what lay underneath: a tacit supposition that the unhappy must have brought their troubles on themselves; that they, beyond the rest of us, deserve to suffer. This had been his theme six years earlier, in *Adventurer* 120:

> It has been the boast of some swelling moralists, that every man's fortune was in his own power, that prudence supplied the place of all other divinities, and that happiness is the unfailing consequence of virtue. But, surely, the quiver of Omnipotence is stored with arrows, against which the shield of human virtue, however adamantine it has been boasted, is held up in vain: we do not always suffer by our crimes; we are not always protected by our innocence.

And this indignation still burns in his arraignment of the philosophy of Pope's *Essay on Man*, more than twenty years later:

> To these profound principles of natural knowledge are added some moral instructions equally new; that self-interest well understood will produce social concord; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits; that evil is sometimes balanced by good; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration and doubtful effect; that our true honour is not to have a great part, but to act it well; that virtue only is our own; and that happiness is always in our power.[1]

Prosperity had not changed Johnson.

Some of the optimistic notions which Johnson attacked appear to us now so simple that we may wonder why he expended such energy in demolishing them. I believe, however, that he measured the force required not so much by the degree of public assent they obtained, as by a motion that he felt within himself: an insidious propensity for day-dreaming. He was, in his own estimation, one who "let year glide after year in preparations to live."[2] To this Rasselas also was prone—together with an inclination "to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity,

[1] *Lives*, ed., G. Birkbeck Hill, III, 244.

[2] *Adventurer* 108.

and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them."[1] Imlac likewise had been a day-dreamer: had, at the outset of life, "amused myself during the voyage, sometimes by learning from the sailors the art of navigation, which I have never practised, and sometimes by forming schemes for my conduct in different situations, in not one of which I have been ever placed."[2] He supposed himself to have outlived such foolishness; but our youthful follies withdraw only to revisit us in another guise; and one of the most deeply humorous episodes in the story reflects Johnson's rueful self-knowledge:

> Imlac now felt the enthusiastic fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profession, when the prince cried out, "Enough! Thou hast convinced me, that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed with thy narration."
>
> "To be a poet, said Imlac, is indeed very difficult." "So difficult, returned the prince, that I will at present hear no more of his labours."[3]

"Perhaps," as Johnson remarks elsewhere, "no class of the human species requires more to be cautioned against this anticipation of happiness, than those that aspire to the name of authors".[4] All through life, his own imagination was occupied with grandiose projects in the realm of letters.

Though Johnson may see this "invisible riot of the mind, this prodigality of being,"[5] as an inherent foible, both ineradicable and open to laughter, he does not regard it with an indulgent eye. The final confessions of the three young day-dreamers are called forth by Imlac's account of the rooted insanity of his friend the Astronomer, and the reflections with which it has filled his own mind:

> "Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason . . . Perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state. There is no man whose imagination does not sometimes predominate over his reason, who can regulate his attention wholly by his will, and whose ideas will come and go at his command."

When we are alone, the imagination is hardly to be controlled:

> "He who has nothing external that can divert him, must find

[1] p. 16.
[2] pp. 42, 43.
[3] p. 52.
[4] *Rambler* 2.
[5] *Rambler* 89.

pleasure in his own thoughts, and must conceive himself what he is not; for who is pleased with what he is?"[1]

This is the formidable context in which Pekuah confesses that she has played the princess in her dreams; Nekayah, the shepherdess of romance; and Rasselas, that he has indulged in a more perilous flight of fancy:

> "I have frequently endeavoured to image the possibility of a perfect government, by which all wrong should be restrained, all vice reformed, and all the subjects preserved in tranquility and innocence . . . This has been the sport and sometimes the labour of my solitude; and I start, when I think with how little anguish I once supposed the death of my father and my brothers."[2]

Thus, the end of *Rasselas*, in which Nekayah's grave words ("To me, said the princess, the choice of life is become less important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity") are followed by more, and yet more projects[3]—this is but a candid recognition of that tension of contrariety which Johnson found in all men's lives, and of which he was poignantly aware in his own. Indeed, he possessed in special measure one characteristic which was bound to impose on his story a confined motion—like that of a ship riding at anchor, which can move, but never remove. He was tenacious; he did not relinquish easily, nor think it prudent to let go; he was dubious of one sort of religious conversion, because he thought it meant relinquishing too much.

It is not well enough remembered that, in *The Fountains*,[4] we have much of the wisdom of *Rasselas*, more simply and less sternly[5] expressed. This little story follows the course of one of the world's oldest fables: a mortal obliges an immortal being, and is rewarded with the magical means of obtaining his every desire, but uses that gift so ill that he must needs beg to be relieved of it. Here, the child Floretta, having won the

[1] pp. 189, 190.

[2] pp. 192, 193. Cf. *Rambler* 8: "He that fancies he should benefit the public more in a great station than the man that fills it, will in time imagine it an act of virtue to supplant him."

[3] Are we to regard the projected return to Abyssinia as a final confession of defeat? Not unless Johnson remembered the circumstances which he had borrowed, for his opening, from his own recollection of Ethiopian rule: that every young man of royal blood must endure seclusion "till the order of succession should call him to the throne" (p. 8).

[4] Contributed to Anna Williams's *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (1766).

[5] Lady Knight, the mother of the author of *Dinarbas*, found it "a fine written but gloomy tale" (G. Birkbeck Hill, *Johnsonian Miscellanies*; II, 173).

favour of the fairy Lilinet, is invited to drink at either of two enchanted fountains, and makes every mistake that we have learned to expect in such a tale. From the fountain of joy she obtains beauty—only to find herself less generally liked than when she was "merely agreeable"; riches, and becomes the object of fortune-hunters—and so on. Each time, she has to acknowledge her error, and drink the water of sorrow to rid herself of the unwelcome gift. Every supernatural advantage but one she at length resigns, and thankfully accepts her share in the common lot of mortals. That one exception is discernment, the "obstinate rationality"[1] which Johnson himself could not or would not surrender, even in exchange for serenity of mind. This tension he preferred to any relaxation of which he believed it capable.

Though we may—and surely should—set aside the charge that *Rasselas* is but a condensation of the vapour arising from despondency, yet there remain some hindrances to its enjoyment. The story creaks: vicissitudes are awkwardly brought about and stiffly related. The happenings are indeed not to be compared with the talk; some, such as the loss and recovery of Pekuah, should ring sharply, but return a leaden echo. Their episodic succession forbids formal symmetry; and there is reason to suspect that Johnson concerned himself little with their disposition. The fortuitous old man by the banks of the Nile rises like an exhalation in the midst of the Astronomer's story, and vanishes in like manner.[2]

To these objections one answer, together with its roots and branches, should be sufficient. When a man writes *out of himself*, we may expect that the writing will be *characteristical*—to use a favourite word alike of Johnson and Dryden: that it will express him in his entirety. And I believe that there is more of Johnson in *Rasselas* than is generally recognized.[3] There is the gift for comic narration which impressed and even startled his associates.[4] Rasselas's observations on the unreason of common life more than once recall the humour of the Rambler in his homelier moods: in the very fatigue of idleness, a "youth and maiden, . . . having little to divert attention, or diversify thought, . . . find themselves uneasy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they shall

[1] *Life*, IV, 289.

[2] pp. 193–198.

[3] True valuation of *Rasselas* is to be found just where it was to be expected: in Professor Nichol Smith's chapter in C. H. E. L.

[4] Hawkins, p. 258; Mrs. Piozzi, in *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, I, 226.

be happy together."[1] We are not far from the social comedy of Jane Austen—who might well recognize a sister in the Princess, despite differences of idiom:

> "But surely, interposed the prince [when Nekayah spoke of unprosperous marriages], you suppose the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I shall seek a wife, it shall be my first question, whether she be willing to be led by reason?"
>
> "Thus it is, said Nekayah, that philosophers are deceived. There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason can never decide. . . . Wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason every morning all the minute detail of a domestick day."[2]

Within this husk of humour is folded the sagacious counsel for which his contemporaries sought Johnson's society: the sagacity of Imlac, when he confers with the Astronomer,[3] comforts the Princess,[4] or is echoed by his apter pupil: "He does nothing," (Nekayah warns her brother) "who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity."[5]

In any comparison with other eighteenth-century "eastern tales"—Hawkesworth's, for example—the sanity of *Rasselas* is manifest. And, even in comparison with work of like quality, the peculiar character of this sanity must make itself felt. For the freshness of great classical, and great romantic, work is preserved in diverse ways. What renews itself with each re-reading of the romantic affirmation is a recovered sense of the initial force with which the particular experience assailed the particular poet. What renews itself with each re-reading of the classical affirmation is a sense of its unexpended applicability. This is the salt that seasons Johnson's writing: the recognition, not blunted by familiarity but sharpened with every return of attention, of the warrant that common experience affords it.

Sanity is a daylight colour; but it need not banish splendour. Cadences in *Rasselas* haunt the ear: " . . . that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life";[6] " . . . treason against the great republick of human nature";[7] " . . . from the wonders which time has

[1] p. 129.
[2] p. 132.
[3] pp. 206, 207.
[4] p. 151.
[5] p. 134.
[6] p. 145.
[7] p. 199.

spared we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed."[1] These are Imlac's; but he has not been granted a monoply.

In calling *Rasselas* a satire, Hawkins signally fails to take account of the difference between visitors and visited. All unreason—except that of hoping against hope for a rational solution of life's perplexity—is to be found among the visited; and, although the unhappiness attending human relationships is a dominant theme in this wide survey of human distresses, yet between the four visitors (three of whom travel for love) there survives a relationship never clouded. Rasselas and Nekayah are indeed open to the very objection that Johnson levelled against Milton's Adam and Eve: "The man and woman who act and suffer are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no transaction in which he can be engaged, beholds no condition in which he can by any effort of imagination place himself; he has, therefore, little natural curiosity or sympathy."[2] And, unlike Adam and Eve, they keep their innocence even after they have left their original seclusion and mingled with humanity in its ordinary state. In the absence of self-reproach, the quest for happiness is surely altruistic; and these two can reproach themselves with nothing worse than expense of time—a commodity they have not to reckon at the common rate. It would, however, be dishonest to use against a man a charge which, when *he* used it, was judged invalid; and, if we reject Johnson's censure of the choice of ideal beings by Milton, we may, on like grounds, accept his own choice of such characters—provided only that the representation satisfies. Like the boy reared in a sort of solitude alien to experience, they are fashioned for the proper purposes of "philosophical fiction". And this particular fiction is the easier of acceptance because it follows that most durable of allegory's traditional patterns, the pattern of a journey. Thus it speaks to us in terms of our sense of continuity in our own experience: of identity persisting through and beyond change. And as we surrender to its rhythm, so we accommodate our gait to the stately motion of those four travellers, all but one of whom accost us in Johnson's own voice.

> Would that they three could know
> How yet burns on in me
> Love—from one lost in Paradise—
> For their grave courtesy.[3]

[1] p. 136.

[2] *Lives of the Poets* I, 181.

[3] Walter de la Mare, *The Three Strangers.*

III

FATHERS AND SONS IN DICKENS

by ELEANOR ROOKE

G. B. S. is supposed to have said, 'Dickens's biographers have spoilt his portrait for those who read his books,' and I realized the truth of this dictum when I read Dame Una Pope-Hennessy's *Charles Dickens.* What struck me most forcibly in this biography was her statement that, though Dickens doted on his little boys as children, he seemed to have lost interest in them as they grew up, and sent most of the seven abroad to fill posts for which they did not care, or were not fitted. She is probably right in explaining this callousness towards his sons by the father's irritation at what he considered their lack of character and initiative. He certainly was delighted and deeply moved at Henry's success when he won a scholarship at Cambridge. But on the whole his real sons seem to have appealed to him much less than the children of his fancy, to all of whom he professed himself "a fond father ".

On the other hand, he loved his two daughters very dearly, as well as his two young sisters-in-law. But one of his daughters remembered her father as visiting every room in the house each norning, "and if a chair was out of its place, or a blind was not quite straight, or a crumb left on the floor, woe betide the offender." Is it unfair to conclude that the offender was oftener than not, a boy? This irritable fussiness over details of daily life might easily alienate growing boys, and when Anne Thackeray Ritchie writes of the Dickens sons cheering her father when he came to fetch his little girls from a party at their house, it makes us wonder whether they would have cheered their own father as heartily.

Towards the end of his life, after the separation from his wife, he spent Christmas with his younger sons. Dame Una quotes him as writing: "The house is pervaded by boys. Every boy has an incalculable power of reproducing himself in every part of the house at every moment. They boil over the house!" Although he did not show how much their noise irritated him, he was glad to get away from them.

Further, when Dame Una deals with Dickens's attitude to his own father, she explains the intensity of the boy's grudge against John Dickens

for letting him continue to work in the blacking factory, which we know he regarded as the cruellest degradation, by the fact that his father, though imprisoned in the Marshalsea, was in receipt of an income of six pounds a week. But at least it was his father who obtained his release, when his mother was willing to let him stay at the hated work, and this made his resentment against his mother far more intense. John Dickens figures in his son's letters as the "Prodigal Father", and he was certainly idle and irresponsible. It is unlikely that he had but a small share of Mr. Micawber's charm, although he seems to have had something of his eloquence. And when Dickens introduces a portrait of John into a novel, it is not primarily as a father of a son that he appears. It is clear that Dickens's relation to his father, as well as to his sons, was not particularly happy; he was not in close touch with his senior or his juniors, and there is not much sign, except in his relation with his son Henry, of mutual respect, though Charley is said to have loved him dearly.

When one considers the novels, the fact emerges that one very rarely finds in them an adult hero with a father living; moreover, where a father with a grown-up son appears, their relationship is seldom good, owing to the fault of either father or son or both; and that where the relationship is satisfactory, as with the Garlands (drawn from life) in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, or Wemmick and his "Aged" in *Great Expectations*, they are very slightly, though in the second example, charmingly, treated, and the characters are not of first importance.

It must be admitted that Sam and Tony Weller in *Pickwick Papers* disprove every word of this; they show mutual affection, mutual confidence and a pleasure in each other's society very rare in Dickens. I might enlarge on this attractive topic, if Mr. Bernard Darwin had not written his magnificent essay upon these two in *Every Idle Dream*. But both father and son are superb humorists and Dickens is seldom unhappy with his humorous characters.

We have seen that Dickens had a father's natural tenderness for his sons, at any rate his elder sons, when they were children. Accordingly, we find in the earlier novels affectionate or even devoted fathers with young sons, like Bob Cratchit, Vincent Crummles, Mr. Micawber, and, in his own odd way, Mr. Squeers. Then there is the outstanding and unique example of a fuller treatment of the theme of a father and a very young son in *Dombey and Son*.

If Dickens seems to fight shy of portraying a good father with an affectionate grown-up son, he does not hesitate to present mothers and sons, and fathers and daughters. This may be due to his holding a com-

mon and not universally true view that parents prefer children of the opposite sex to their own. Whatever the reason, we find outstanding examples in Mrs. Rudge and Barnaby, Mrs. Mailie and Harry as well as Mrs. Leeford and Monks in *Oliver Twist*, Mrs. Nubbles and Kit in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the Steerforths, the Heaps, and of course David and his mother in *David Copperfield*, the Guppy's and the Woodcourts in *Bleak House*, Polly Toodle and Rob the Grinder in *Dombey and Son*, Mrs, Merdle and Edmund Sparkler, Mrs. Gowan and Henry in *Little Dorrit*, Bounderby and his mother in *Hard Times*, Mrs. Crisparkle and Septimus in *Edwin Drood*. Nearly all these mothers adore their sons, and several spoil them. Of a minor character in *Great Expectations*, Startop, we read that he had been spoiled by a weak mother. But what a mother of sons at the best could be is illustrated by Mrs. Rouncewell in *Bleak House*, and in the same book Dickens says of Matthew Bagnet, 'some men rarely revert to their father, but seem, in the bankbooks of their remembrance, to have transferred all the stock of filial affection to their mother's name.' If we think, through the greater part of *Little Dorrit*, that Mrs. Clennam is an exception to the general rule of loving mothers, we find before the end of the book that she was not the mother of Arthur, nor indeed of anyone at all.

But Dickens seems to take greater pleasure in presenting fathers and daughters, whose devotion, whether mutual or one-sided, is as a rule genuine and often touching. This happy portrayal of the relationship may be partly due to his affection for his own daughters, though none of the fathers resemble their author, and the examples are opulently varied. Some of these occur to one's mind at once; Gabriel Varden and Dolly, Mr. Kenwigs and Morwena, Mr. Crummles (who though proud of his sons is infinitely prouder of the Phenomenon), the Pecksniffs, the Spenlows, the Wickfields, the Heaps, Mr. Omer and Minnie, Mr. Jellaby and Caddy, Mr. Dorrit and Amy (where the devotion is on the daughter's side only), Dr. Manette and Lucie, and, all to be found in a single book, *Our Mutual Friend*, Rumty Wilfer and Bella, Hexam and Lizzie, Riderhood and Pleasant, the Doll's Dressmaker and her 'bad child', and even Mr. Podsnap and Georgina. In the same book we find one remarkable exception in old Harmon, who has turned his daughters out of doors before the story begins. Mr. Dombey, with his change of attitude to Florence is a study by himself, and so, I think, is Mr. Gradgrind in *Hard Times*. And we are left in doubt as to the devotion of Jupe for Sissie in the same book, though there is no doubt about hers for him.

Just as so many of his young men are fatherless, so most of his young girls are motherless. In fact, the mother-daughter relationship is rare in Dickens, as if he were afraid to touch on it except very slightly. This does not necessarily imply a superficial treatment—we have the passion of the dying Mrs. Dombey and the unhappy Lady Dedlock to prove the contrary—but in each of these examples the treatment is extremely brief. It may be noticed that, when the daughter has a mother as well as a father, the mother is an unpleasing character; Mrs. Varden, Mrs. Jellaby and Mrs. Wilfer are the outstanding examples, the first two are unkind to both husband and daughter, the last to the husband only, but she certainly cannot be called a good mother.

Nor can Mrs. Nickleby in her idiotic treatment of Kate, nor Sally Brass in her cruel and vindictive attitude to the Marchioness, be called even tolerable mothers.

But it is time to return to the theme of Fathers and Sons. It may be that Dickens, having lived with his own father, started off with the idea at the back of his mind that fathers were often not entirely satisfactory in their relation with their sons, and that, if the relations were not happy, it was the fathers who were commonly most to blame. Added to this he did not, as the years went by, find enough enduring parental instinct in himself to give life to the father and son theme in his books, except very occasionally. We find no story like *The Newcomes* or *Richard Feverel* or *Weir of Hermiston* in all his novels. He never treats the subject in length and depth as he does the father-daughter theme in *Little Dorrit* and *Dombey and Son*.

Perhaps the first thing that strikes us is that nearly all his heroes, and indeed almost all his young men of any importance, are fatherless. Take Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, Dick Swiveller, Martin Chuzzlewit, Mark Tapley, Water Gay, Toots, David Copperfield, Allan Woodcourt, Arthur Clennam, Sidney Carton and Charles Dawnay, Pip, John Harmon and Edwin Drood. These young men's dead fathers are either not described or indicated at all, or they are weaklings like the elder Copperfield, Nickleby and Clennam. And though the Cherrybles say to Nicholas Nickleby, 'it's a bad thing for a young man to lose his father,' it is not clear that Nicholas would have been much more fortunate if his poor father had survived his financial ruin. The sole character who feels deeply his sad plight as an orphan is the sensitive Wegg.

The most emphatic statement in favour of fathers comes from Steerforth, whose father appears to have died when he was very young, when he says to David, "I wish to God I had had a judicious father these

last twenty years . . . I wish with all my soul I had been better guided." But there is very little trace of a father's influence ever being judicious, or of a young man ever suffering himself to be guided, unless we expect David Copperfield falling in with Miss Trotwood's plans for his career, though he did not long remain in the profession she chose for him. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, John Westlock, whose father has lately died, is looked upon as lucky because he is heir to a fortune; no loss is recognized.

It may be significant that many of the male characters who seem to be specially dear to Dickens, such as Mr. Pickwick, the Cherrybles, Mr. Brownlow in *Oliver Twist*, the single gentleman in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Tom Pinch, Captain Cuttle, Mr. Peggotty, Mr. Jarndyce, George Rouncewell, Joe Gargery, Mr. Boffin and the Jew, Riah, and perhaps Twemlow, as well as Mr. Grewgious in *Edwin Drood*, are all childless and most of them bachelors. It may be that he felt that fatherhood, in particular if the child be a son, was a test too hard for human nature, and he dared not risk the reputations of his favourites.

On the other hand, he makes fathers of some of his unmitigated villains, even Quilp and Ralph Nickleby. There is seldom sentiment, false or true, about fatherhood in Dickens. It was of the mother, not the father, that Dickens wrote, in *The Battle of Life* "the great character that purifies the heart and raises the exalted nature nearer to the angels."

There may be some significance in the fact that in *Barnaby Rudge*, which may have been written, though not published, at the very outset of his career, we find something like a study of unhappy relationships between father and son, in each case owing to the fault of the father. Whatever he meant to be at, this is what he did, probably all unknowingly.

First in order comes old John Willett, a comic character to the reader but anything but comic to his victim, whose conceit and stupid tyranny go far towards ruining the life of his son Joe. He treats him as a child, allows him no money, even forbids him to talk: "When I was your age I never talked. I never wanted to talk. I listened and improved myself, that's what I did." A little later Joe says:

> ". . . if you mean to tell me that I'm never to open my lips——"
> "Silence, sir!" roared his father, "No, you never are. When your opinion's wanted, you give it. When you're spoke to, you speak. When your opinion's not wanted and you're not spoke to, don't you give an opinion and don't you speak."

Joe's constant public humiliation at his father's hands, the progressive curtailment of his liberties, and—the last straw—the insolence of John's

cronies, drive Joe to leave home. Yet John Willett considered himself a model father; talking to Hugh, the unacknowledged bastard of Mr. Chester, a son as neglected as poor Joe was pestered, he says:

> "That chap, . . . though he's got all his faculties about him—bottled up and corked down, if I may say so, somewheres or another . . . has no more imagination than Barnaby has. And why hasn't he? . . . Because they was never drawed out of him when he was a boy—that's why. What would any of us have been if our fathers hadn't drawed our faculties out of us? What would my boy Joe have been if I hadn't drawed his faculties out of him?"

Willet is one example of a bad father, but at any rate he is no hypocrite. In the chapter following John's speech about Hugh, we find Mr. Chester, that strange travesty of Lord Chesterfield, talking of his legitimate son, Edward, whose engagement to Emma Haredale he is planning to break with the help of his enemy, her uncle:

> "I will appeal [he says] to her woman's heart, her dignity, her pride, her duty——"
>
> "I shall do the same by Ned," said Mr. Chester . . . "If there is anything real in the world, it is those amazingly fine feelings and those natural obligations which must subsist between father and son . . . the very highest and most honourable feelings of our nature, with every consideration of filial duty and affection, and all that sort of thing, imperatively demand that he should run away with an heiress."
>
> "And break her heart as speedily as possible?" said Mr. Haredale . . .
>
> "There Ned will act exactly as he pleases," returned the other . . . "that's entirely his affair. I wouldn't for the world interfere with my son, Haredale, beyond a certain point. The relationship between father and son, you know, is positively quite a holy kind of bond."

What Mr. Chester really thought about this holy bond is in part at any rate revealed to Edward:

> "A son, Ned, unless he is old enough to be a companion . . . is not the kind of thing to have about one. He is a restraint upon his father, his father is a restraint upon him, and they make each other mutually uncomfortable."

Chester claims that by giving Edward a gentleman's education, and introducing him into good society, he has provided for his son for life, and relies on his doing something to provide for him in return. Edward fails to understand his father's meaning. "My meaning, Ned, is obvious

. . . my meaning is, that you must do as I bid; that you must marry well and make the most of yourself." In pursuance of his plot, Mr. Chester does not hesitate to blacken Edward's character to the vain and silly Mrs. Varden, who believes him, and tries also to traduce his son to Emma Haredale, but in vain. When a little later, Edward for once addresses him as "Father" he receives in reply:

> "My good fellow . . . for Heaven's sake don't call me by that obsolete and ancient name. Have some regard for delicacy. Am I grey or wrinkled, do I go on crutches, have I lost my teeth, that you adopt such a mode of address? Good God, how very coarse!"

When Edward, still feeling some filial affection, begs his father to discuss their differences with mutual confidence, Chester curses him, and refuses him the shelter of his roof. And so Edward, like Joe, is free. He was more patient than Joe Willett, but Mr. Chester has driven him into a state of shocked and horrified disgust, compared with which Joe Willet's angry resentment seems mild.

Mr. Chester, whose dislike of coarseness is so intense, has to face something coarser than the name of father on Edward's lips. After the suppression of the Gordon riots, Gabriel Varden brings him the news that Hugh, who is to be hanged that day, is his son. Chester appears unmoved and treats Varden to his usual heartless banter, but his smile gives place to a haggard and anxious expression when Varden leaves him. But even when alone he remarks:

> "Extremely distressing to be the parent of such an uncouth creature! Still, I gave him very good advice. I told him he would certainly be hanged. I could have done no more if I had known of our relationship; and there are a great many fathers who have never done as much for *their* natural children."

On the scaffold, Hugh calls down the curse of violent death upon his father, but of this coarseness Mr. Chester remained ignorant, though the curse was fulfilled.

The third bad father is Rudge, whose murderous crime caused Barnaby to be born a mental defective. He has no feeling for his only child, and falls in with the cruel plot of the blind villain Stagg, to barter Barnaby's life for his mother's refusal to identify her husband. All the natural feeling which Rudge lacks, Barnaby has in abundance. When the two meet in Newgate, and Rudge says: "I am your father," Barnaby springs towards him, puts his arms about his neck, and presses his head against his chest! When they escape, Barnaby tends and feeds his

wretched father with an innate sense of duty and affection, and he is miserable when his mother tells him of his father's real nature. Almost the last speech of Rudge is the curse he invokes on his wife and son, coupled with the words, "I hate you both."

No one would claim that *Barnaby Rudge* is a good novel, or particularly characteristic of Dickens; and it may be pure coincidence that we find in it these three bad fathers. But nowhere else in one of his novels do we find a similar theme treated three times—he is too good an artist for that. The very fact that all three fathers are exaggerated types, and two of them melodramatically overdrawn, makes it seem possible that Dickens had at this time an obsession on the subject of guilty fathers and their neglect or ill treatment of their innocent sons. And it is significant that two of the fathers have theories—in different ways, shocking theories—about the relationship of father and son, and both agree about the necessity of implicit obedience.

As for the reconciliation of Joe Willett and his father, it can only be very incomplete, since John has lost his reason; but if all three fathers had died unreconciled, the symmetry would have been too unnatural for Dickens.

Nicholas Nickleby is another novel that has a frightful picture of a villain father. In this book he actually helps to hound his unhappy son to his death. But Ralph Nickleby did not know that Smike had survived, and is, I suppose, innocent in this particular, but the situation could not have arisen if he had been a normal father. He is also less guilty than Chester and Rudge in that he is capable of remorse; I think too that his suicide is partly due to his discovery of his own cruelty to his child.

A new picture of a father and son occurs in *Martin Chuzzlewit.* For the first and only time in Dickens's novels, the son, Jonas Chuzzlewit, is a far worse man than his father, Anthony. True, Anthony is a miser, but he is not an out and out villain, while Jonas has not a single redeeming feature; he is mean, base, treacherous, insolent and cruel, as well as greedy and grasping. His father, rather surprisingly, loves him, and delights in his avarice as well as in his sharp tongue. When Jonas declares that poor old Chuffey's choking fits are more entertaining than Anthony's senility, the young man's coarse allusions, even to himself, filled the father with a stealthy glee, causing him to rub his hands and chuckle covertly as if he said in his sleeve: "I taught him, *I* trained him. This is the heir of my bringing up, sly, cunning, and covetous, he'll not squander my money. I worked for this, I hoped for this, it has been the great end and aim of all my life."

These unspoken words of old Anthony almost amount to tragic irony. For he was to realise how mistaken he had been in his training of his son. After his master's death, Chuffey tells old Martin and the assembled company, that when Anthony discovered that Jonas was trying to poison him, he came to the old clerk's bedside, weeping, and said:

> "Oh Chuff . . . oh dear old Chuff! a voice came into my room tonight and told me that this crime began with me. It began when I taught him to be too covetous of what I have to leave, and made the expectation of it his great business! . . . It's a dreadful thing to have my own child thirsting for my death. But I might have known it. I have sown and I must reap."

And so Anthony Chuzzlewit dies, not of the arsenic, but of a broken heart.

Here is a more mature treatment of the father and son theme than in *Barnaby Rudge*. There the two selfish, unsympathetic fathers, Willett and Chester, try to mould their sons and fail utterly, the sons reacting violently against the paternal influence. The contrasted black and white of Mr. Chester and Edward is crude and quite unnatural. Nor could any of the three fathers in this book recognize their own errors as fathers or as men. Anthony Chuzzlewit's remorse and self-condemnation makes him a far less hateful and more human being than Chester and Rudge. And Jonas, odious as he is, is more real and more credible than Mr. Chester. Dickens's realisation of the startling results of our actions approaches Shakespeare's: "Our deeds are ours, their ends none of our own."

In *Dombey and Son*, it appears at first sight as if the father and son motive were going to predominate. Somewhat in the manner of Anthony Chuzzlewit, Mr. Dombey looks on his son as heir to his wealth, but still more as one who is to become his partner and successor in his great business. But little Paul's sense of values is entirely different from Jonas Chuzzlewit's: "Papa, what's money? . . . Why couldn't money save me my mamma?"

Dickens tries to explain Mr. Dombey's attitude to Paul at some length. "Some philosophers tell us," he writes,

> that selfishness is at the root of our best loves and affections. Mr. Dombey's young child was, from the beginning, so distinctly important to him as a part of his own greatness, or (which is the same thing) of the greatness of Dombey and Son, that there is no doubt his parental affection might have been easily traced . . . to a very low foundation. But he loved his son with all the love he had. If there

> were a warm place in his frosty heart, his son occupied it; if its very hard surface could receive the impression of any image, the image of that son was there; though not so much as an infant or as a boy, but as a grown man—the 'Son' of the Firm. Therefore he was impatient to advance into the future, and to hurry over the intervening passages of his history. Therefore he had little or no anxiety about them, in spite of his love; feeling as if the boy had a charmed life, and *must* become the man with whom he held such constant communication in his thoughts, and for whom he planned and projected, as for an existing reality, every day.

The scene is set for a far more interesting and subtle treatment of the father and son theme than we find anywhere else in Dickens. If he had had the courage to keep Paul alive, the conflict between father and son would have been far more lifelike than that between Mr. Chester and Edward. Did the relationship not appeal to him sufficiently for him to make the imaginative effort which would have been required?

An entirely new theme here is Mr. Dombey's jealousy of Florence, which develops into hatred—a theme most unusual in Dickens. I feel that the real subject of the book is not Dombey and Son but Dombey and Daughter,[1] and the final reconciliation between Mr. Dombey and Florence illustrates Dickens's incapacity for presenting a father and daughter permanently estranged, if it is not simply due to his preference for a happy ending.

David Copperfield has little bearing on my subject, apart from Steerforth's allusion to his lack of a father's guidance. But it is in this book that Dickens gives us his first portrait of his own father. He transfers the cruelty of putting a young boy to what he considered a degrading employment to David's stepfather, the odious Mr. Murdstone, while John Dickens appears as the entrancing, if improvident, Mr. Micawber. It appears that Dickens had been able to forgive his father for sending him to Lamert's warehouse because he afterwards rescued him from his hated labour, and he turned his resentment against his mother because she wanted him to go back to it. It is perhaps significant that immediately after the passage which describes David's shame and hopelessness at his occupation in the blacking factory, we find the agreeable description of Mr. Micawber on his first appearance. If Dickens had still been cherishing resentment against his father, it is unlikely that his revival of his old sufferings would have been followed by so sympathetic a portrait.

The eldest child of Mr. Micawber, the boy Wilkins, was at that time

[1] This is the conclusion independently reached below in another contribution to this volume.—ed.

about four years old, and we hear less of his opinion of his father than even Paul Dombey's of his. But there is no doubt about Mr. Micawber's affection for his family, and after the Chuzzlewits and Dombeys, there may be an underlying suggestion that even a father as improvident and unreliable as Mr. Micawber is preferable to a financially sound parent like Anthony Chuzzlewit or Mr. Dombey. At least he did not attempt to impose his own views on his children. But it need hardly be said that it is not primarily as a father that we regard Mr. Micawber.

Bleak House is full of orphans or fatherless young men, and the unhappy Pardiggle and Jellaby children are made unhappy rather by their mothers than their fathers.

The only important example of a father and son is that of Mr. Turveydrop and his son Prince, who married Caddy Jellaby. When the dutiful Prince announces his engagement, Mr. Turveydrop exclaims,

> "Boy . . . it is well that your sainted mother is spared this pang. Strike deep, and spare not. Strike home, sir, strike home!" . . .
>
> "My dear father," returned Prince, "we well know what little comforts you are accustomed to, and have a right to; and it will always be our study, and our pride, to provide those before anything. If you will bless us with your approval and consent, father, we shall not think of being married until it is quite agreeable to you; and when we *are* married, we shall always make you—of course—our first consideration. You must ever be the Head and Master here, father; and we feel how truly unnatural it would be in us if we failed to know it, or if we failed to exert ourselves in every possible way to please you." . . .
>
> "My son!" said Mr. Turveydrop. "My children! I cannot resist your prayer. Be happy!"

This is not a repetition of the Chester-Edward theme, in spite of both fathers' reluctance to allow a good son to marry a wife who is unlikely to advance the family fortunes. For Mr. Turveydrop though idle, selfish and worthless is not actively wicked, and the devoted Prince, who supports his father by giving dancing lessons, seems to regard him as of more account than the girl he loves. Further, there is satire but no touch of comedy about Mr. Chester, whereas the comedy enveloping old Turveydrop almost conceals the satire. None the less he is another example of a father imposing his will, for once successfully, on a son.

In *Hard Times* Mr. Gradgrind is determined to bring up his family of five entirely on facts to the exclusion of emotion, amusement, or, apparently, principle. Only two of the children, Louisa and Thomas, have any importance in the book, and of these, as we should expect, the

father much prefers the daughter. In spite of all his hardness, Louisa knows that he will give in to a request from her rather than from Thomas. Dickens alters his usual pattern, in making Mr. Gradgrind interfere actively with the daughter's life and not with the son's. He drives her into a most unsuitable and unhappy marriage with the odious Bounderby, but, when she is tempted to run away with a flashy admirer, she flies instead to her father, and her agony touches his stony heart, so that he really undergoes a species of conversion and becomes a human being. The bearing of this change on the father and son story is that Mr. Gradgrind now exerts himself to save his wretched son from being brought to trial, when his factual upbringing has led him not only to theft but also to the unutterable meanness of inculpating an innocent man. Like Anthony Chuzzlewit, Mr. Gradgrind realises some part of his own responsibility for his son's turpitude, and his remorse is not lessened by Thomas's clarifying of the reason for his crime by reminding him of his training in statistics:

> "If a thunderbolt had fallen on me," said the father, "it would have shocked me less than this!"
>
> "I don't see why," grumbled the son. "So many people are employed in situations of trust; so many people, out of so many, will be dishonest. I have heard you talk, a hundred times, of its being a law. How can *I* help laws? You have comforted others with such things, father. Comfort yourself!"

With *Little Dorrit* we come to Dickens's second and far subtler portrait of his own father. Satire replaces humour in his attitude to John Dickens's failings, and the picture is as cruel as it is masterly. As the father of Amy, Mr. Dorrit is strikingly and unpleasantly drawn but he makes no attempt to influence the dissipated and worthless Tip. As the father of a son he has no place in this essay.

Nor has *Great Expectations* any bearing on my thesis. It has only two pairs of father and son, Matthew and Herbert Pocket and Wemmick and his "Aged". I have already mentioned the Wemmicks and their delightful relationship, an example of mutual affection and mutual admiration very uncommon in Dickens—and perhaps only possible to him because it is partly comic.

"Mr. Pocket," writes Dickens, "was a most delightful lecturer on domestic economy, and his treatises on the management of children and servants were considered the very best text books on those themes." But, owing to his snobbish bone-lazy wife, he has no chance of putting his ideas into practice. Good and honourable man though he is, and re-

spected by his grown-up son, he does not seem to have any close link with Herbert.

Our Mutual Friend looks like a study in fathers and daughters, but there are at any rate three examples of fathers of sons. Old Harmon, though he is dead before the book opens, has an enormous influence on the development of the plot. He is probably Dickens's worst father outside the pages of *Barnaby Rudge*. He had, for no known reason, turned his wife out of his house, and followed up this action by turning out his daughter. She had shrunk from the marriage her father had planned for her, because she was secretly engaged to the man of her own choice, and old Harmon cursed her and drove her out on a cold winter's night—drove her indeed, it appears, to her death after a life of poverty with her husband.

His son, at school in Belgium, continued to come home after his sister's expulsion, and "pleaded his sister's cause". So he was also cursed and turned out at the age of fourteen. The poor boy had been sent abroad "all alone and forlorn" when he was only seven, with poor clothes and scanty luggage. Now, disowned by his wealthy father, he went abroad for the second time to seek his fortune.

When Mr. Boffin described old Harmon as an awful Tartar, and Mrs. Boffin called him to his face a flinty-hearted rascal, both seem guilty of understatement. He was as avaricious as Anthony Chuzzlewit, but Anthony did not terrorize his son as young John Harmon was terrorized when he was five or six years old. Indeed he was amazingly generous to Jonas, in not publicly denouncing him as a poisoner; in his own way he loved his son. There was no trace of human tenderness in old Harmon. But he had some family feeling, and soon after the boy's leaving England he made a will leaving him the bulk of his considerable property on one condition. Here old Harmon comes into line with so many fathers in Dickens; he tries to interfere with and control his son's life. John is to marry a certain girl about ten years his junior, or forfeit his inheritance. On this will depends the main plot of *Our Mutual Friend*. The fact that by a subsequent will this unnatural father disinherits his son has almost no effect on the story, but it puts old Harmon into an even lower category as a father.

A far less important father and son are Gaffer and Charley Hexam, for we are much more concerned with their relation with Lizzie than with their attitude to each other. Gaffer Hexam is fiercely opposed to either of his children's receiving any education, and so becoming, as he thinks, his superior, and Charley is set on getting all the education he can and

becoming a teacher. The daughter, Lizzie, is so devoted to her wretched father that she resists all advice to leave him and better her position, but she persuades Charley to go away, as his only chance of attaining his ambition. The father is infuriated on hearing of the boy's departure, and when Lizzie says that Charley hoped for his forgiveness, cries out,

> "Let him never come anigh me to ask me my forgiveness . . . Let him never come within sight of my eyes, nor yet within reach of my arm. His own father ain't good enough for him. He's disowned his own father. His own father, therefore, disowns him for ever and ever, as a unnat'ral young beggar . . . . Let him never put his head inside that door."

The violence with which these words are uttered is emphasized by Hexam's striking downward with his knife at the end of every sentence. For here is a father, not perhaps as cruel as Harmon but as implacable.

Both Harmon and Hexam appear as extreme cases, just possible in real life but not therefore sufficiently probable for fiction. But in the father of Eugene Wrayburn, Dickens has perhaps drawn the most human of his dictatorial fathers. In conversation with Mortimer Lightwood, Eugene Wrayburn, thus begins his account of his father:

> "My respected father has found, down in the parental neighbourhood, a wife for his not-generally-respected son."
>
> "With some money, of course?" [rejoins Lightwood].
>
> "With some money, of course, or he would not have found her. My respected father—let me shorten the dutiful tautology by substituting in future M.R.F., which sounds military, and rather like the Duke of Wellington."
>
> "What an absurd fellow you are, Eugene!"
>
> "Not at all, I assure you. M.R.F. having always in the clearest manner provided (as he calls it) for his children by pre-arranging from the hour of the birth of each, and sometimes from an earlier period, what the devoted little victim's calling and course in life should be, M.R.F. pre-arranged for myself that I was to be the barrister I am (with the slight addition of an enormous practice, which has not accrued), and also the married man I am not."
>
> "The first you have often told me."
>
> "The first I have often told you. Considering myself sufficiently incongruous on my legal eminence, I have until now suppressed my domestic destiny. You know M.R.F., but not as well as I do. If you knew him as well as I do, he would amuse you."
>
> "Filially spoken, Eugene!"
>
> "Perfectly so, believe me; and with every sentiment of affectionate deference towards M.R.F. But if he amuses me, I can't help it. When my eldest brother was born, of course the rest of us knew

(I mean the rest of us would have known, if we had been in existence) that he was heir to the Family Embarrassments—we call it before company the Family Estate. But when my second brother was going to be born by-and-by, 'this,' says M.R.F., 'is a little pillar of the church.' *Was* born, and became a pillar of the church; a very shaky one. My third brother appeared . . . M.R.F. . . instantly declared him a Circumnavigator. Was pitchforked into the Navy, but has not circumnavigated. I announced myself, and was disposed of with the highly satisfactory results embodied before you. When my younger brother was half an hour old, it was settled by M.R.F. that he should have a mechanical genius, and so on. Therefore I say that M.R.F. amuses me."

"Touching the lady, Eugene?"

"There M.R.F. ceases to be amusing, because my intentions are opposed to touching the lady."

"Do you know her?"

"Not in the least."

"Hadn't you better see her?"

"My dear Mortimer, you have studied my character. Could I possibly go down there, labelled 'ELIGIBLE. ON VIEW', and meet the lady, similarly labelled? Anything to carry out M.R.F's arrangements, I am sure, with the greatest pleasure—except matrimony. . . ."

It is remarkable that Wrayburn senior never makes an appearance in his own person, we only hear of him through the conversation of his son. But even so his personality is more real to us than, say, Mr. Chester's. And this, not only because Eugene in his attitude of tolerant but critical amusement is far more like reality than the would-be dutiful Edward, but because Dicken's art approaches life more nearly when humour is allowed its place. To the reader, Mr. Chester appears so exaggerated as to be absurd, but he is not absurd to Dickens. M.R.F. is absurd to the reader and to Dickens, and is therefore credible.

And when Eugene, rescued from death by Lizzie Hexam, marries her, Mr. Wrayburn becomes more human still. Eugene, not yet fully recovered, is again speaking to Mortimer Lightwood.

" . . . my mind is full, and I want to empty it. . . . M.R.F., who is a much younger cavalier than I, and a professed admirer of beauty, was so affable as to remark the other day . . . that Lizzie ought to have her portrait painted. Which, coming from M.R.F., may be considered equivalent to a melodramatic blessing."

"You are getting well," said Mortimer, with a smile.

"Really," said Eugene, "I mean it. When M.R.F. said that, and followed it up by rolling the claret (for which he called, and I paid) in his mouth, and saying, 'My dear son, why do you drink this trash?' it was tantamount—in him—to a paternal benediction on our

> union, accompanied with a gush of tears. The coolness of M.R.F. is not to be measured by ordinary standards."
>
> "True enough," said Lightwood.
>
> "That's all," pursued Eugene, "that I shall ever hear from M.R.F. on the subject, and he will continue to saunter through the world with his hat on one side. My marriage being thus solemnly recognized at the family altar, I have no further trouble on that score."

This is in what one of his critics has described as the most savage of his books, a critic who is shocked because the Doll's Dressmaker puts pepper on the vinegar and brown paper for Fledgeby's bruises. Granted that the portrait of Bradley Headstone is painted cruelly, and that Eugene Wrayburn is insufferable in his treatment of the wretched schoolmaster, yet, in his relation to his respected father, it seems to me that Dickens has given us the most humane picture of a grown-up son. And his recognition of the possibility of an overbearing father changing his mind makes the elder Wrayburn an exceptionally human parent.

Finally, in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* we find the supposed situation of the Harmons repeated, but this time in fact. In both books the fathers Harmon and Drood are dead before the story begins, both leave wills or commands which all but force the sons to marry according to the fathers' wishes. In the latter book the girl's father has co-operated with the elder Drood in the plan for the marriage of their children. Unlike John Harmon, Edwin has long known the girl whom the fathers destined for his wife, and is fond of her, but he keenly resents the parental interference. Again unlike Harmon, he takes it for granted that no other course except marrying "Pussy" is open to him, and the result is his actual or attempted murder by his uncle, who wants the girl for himself.

It may or may not be significant that when his eldest son, Charley, was engaged to Bessie Evans, the daughter of a man he detested, Dickens strongly disapproved of the connexion. When, in 1861, Charley was married to Miss Evans, his father showed kindness to the young couple, but refused to attend the wedding or enter their house. *Our Mutual Friend* began to appear in 1863 and was finished in 1865. It may possibly be that in creating the elder Wrayburn (M.R.F.) the only father in the novels with a large family of sons, Dickens may have been very vaguely thinking of himself. Mr Wrayburn's plans for each of the sons are more definite and made much earlier than any plans of Dickens, nor, since he did not look for initiative in his children, would he have said with Dickens that he had "brought up the largest family ever known, with the smallest disposition to do anything for themselves." His plan for

Eugene's marriage to a girl in his country neighbourhood has no similarity to anything in Dickens's own experience, and his probable disapproval to the marriage with Lizzie Hexam, of which he afterwards approves, has no parallel in Dickens's objection to Charley's marriage with Bessie Evans. Since Dickens made no plans for his sons' marriages, the wishes of John Harmon (later revoked) and Drood Senior have no relation to actual fact.

Indeed it is difficult, except for a trained psychologist, to find the link between Dickens's treatment of the Father and Son motive and his own experience. No father's feeling for his son, nor son's for his father, is represented with anything approaching the vividness and reality of the emotion experienced by David Copperfield in his courtship of Dora. Dickens was here inspired by his own feelings for Maria Beadnell; neither as son or father did he ever experience emotions of such intensity. Nor except once, in *Pickwick Papers*, did the Father and Son theme grip him and force him to write with all his immense energy and enjoyment, as he wrote when he was portraying Mrs. Gamp or Flora Finching. The subject did not stir his imagination, and his various attempts strike the reader as book-making rather than creation.

It is not only because his own experience did not lead to an imaginative treatment of the theme, it is partly because the relationship is one of the most difficult of human relationships to represent. It requires a depth of insight, a delicacy of treatment, which is perhaps beyond Dickens, and which is found to perfection in *Fathers and Sons* by Turgenev, published in the year that Dickens began to think of *Our Mutual Friend*. The quite ordinary theme of the devoted, almost doting father, and the son in his early twenties, not lacking in affection but bent on establishing his independence, is treated by Turgenev twice in the same book without any sense of repetition and with convincing reality.

I cannot attempt to explain why, when the theme was not really congenial, Dickens introduced it so often.

IV

DICKENS AT WORK ON *DOMBEY AND SON*

by JOHN BUTT AND KATHLEEN TILLOTSON

I

WHEN *Dombey and Son* first appeared on 1 October 1846 with an instalment of thirty-two closely printed octavo pages, Dickens was embarking once more upon his favourite form of publication.

The monthly serial presented inherent difficulties of planning and presentation of which he had long been aware. In the original preface to *Pickwick Papers* (1837) he had insisted that

> while the different incidents were linked together by a chain of interest strong enough to prevent their appearing unconnected or impossible, the general design should be so simple as to sustain no injury from this detached and desultory form of publication, extending over no fewer than twenty months. In short, it was necessary . . . that every number should be, to a certain extent, complete in itself and yet that the whole twenty numbers, when collected, should form one tolerably harmonious whole. . . .

'It is obvious' he continued 'that in a work published with a view to such considerations, no artfully interwoven or ingeniously complicated plot can with reason be expected'. Yet experiment and experience were to disprove this; for the 'plot' which serves to bring *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–9) to a conclusion, though neither artful nor ingenious, is interwoven and complicated in the extreme. Experience was also to reveal the temptation offered by the current monthly Number for indulging the whims of an unbridled fancy. In the preface to *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) he claimed that he had from time to time 'put a strong constraint' upon himself and had kept 'a steadier eye upon the general purpose and design'.

These and other statements (notably the address to the readers of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, September 1841) show an increasing attention to problems of structure and a belief that there was no insuperable obstacle to writing, barely ahead of its publication in monthly instalments complete in themselves, a novel with a well-defined 'purpose and

design'—by which phrase Dickens simply means purpose—worked out by an 'artfully interwoven' and 'complicated' plot. Dickens's performance up to the publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit* showed few signs of his capacity to realize such an achievement. But the intention is clearly formulated, and in *Dombey and Son* he goes a great way towards reaching it. With *Dombey and Son,* in fact, Dickens begins a new chapter in his work.

It is significant of his renewed determination to keep 'a steadier eye upon the general purpose and design' that Dickens now found it desirable for the first time to plan each instalment on paper before he began writing. These plans take the form of a review (on the left-hand side of the sheet) of the incidents and characters to be used in the Number, and a subsequent arrangement[1] (on the right-hand side) of the material under chapter-headings; and they therefore present valuable evidence both of the degree of consistency with which Dickens maintained his initial purpose, and of the changes in plan made during the course of writing.

II

Apart from the text itself, the available sources of evidence for 'the strength of his mastery over his first design' and the degree of consistency with which he maintained his purpose, fall under five heads;[2] (1) the title, (2) the cover-design, (3) the letters (especially the letter to Forster on 25 July 1846, accompanying the first four chapters), (4) the manuscript, including the Number-plans, (5) the proof-sheets.[3] An examination

[1] The value of the Number-plan was not exhausted when Dickens had completed his monthly instalment. The plan also served as a quick reminder of the main incidents in a previous chapter. This was especially important when he had sent his only manuscript, a corrected first draft, to the printer. It was therefore his custom, if he had not already drafted the chapter contents, to summarize them after the chapter or Number had been written, whenever the initial plan provided an inadequate summary. An entry made before the writing of a chapter is not invariably distinguishable from an entry made after the chapter was completed, but the form of words used and the colour of the ink frequently assist in identification. The physical appearance and nature of these Number-plans are more fully described in two articles by John Butt: 'Dickens at Work', *Durham University Journal*, XL, 3, New Series IX, 3 (June 1948) and 'Dickens's Notes for his Serial Parts', *The Dickensian*, XLV, 3 (June 1949).

[2] No 'master-plan' survives, and there is no reason to suppose that such a plan was set on paper.

[3] The Number-plans are bound up with the MS., and these and the proof-sheets are in the Forster collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

of (1) and (2) and the letters of the three months preceding publication will throw light on the nature of that 'first design' at a stage when the writing of the novel had barely begun.

It is impossible to say just when the design took shape, but it was evidently growing in the author's mind for six months before he put pen to paper. 'A new book in shilling numbers' was in his thoughts at the end of January 1846; between then and his departure for Switzerland at the end of May he was clearing the decks for action. In March the publishers were approached; in mid-April the first announcement appeared in the press—'A New English Story, By Mr. Dickens, to be published in Twenty Monthly Parts, price 1s. each, is now in preparation'; and on 18 May the author committed himself also to a date—'No. 1 will be published on the First of October'.[1] Such open self-commitment would nowadays imply some pre-existent writing of the novel; for Dickens it was enough that 'the characters . . . were growing in his mind'. Not until he was well settled at Lausanne, at the end of June, did he 'plunge straight over head and ears into the story . . . BEGAN DOMBEY'.

Forster had been, as usual, his sole confidant over the unwritten book, though he has unfortunately not extended much of his confidence to us. To him the word 'Dombey' must have already carried a whole train of associations; the title had undoubtedly been decided on some time before. No hesitance over it, and no alternative forms (as for *Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, and *Little Dorrit*) are recorded; but Dickens showed what store he set by it in emphasizing the need for secrecy, 'the very name getting out would be ruinous' (18 July), and to another correspondent 'the name shall not pass these lips until the bills proclaim it' (9 July). The bills proclaimed it at the end of August:

> Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son, Wholesale, Retail, and for Exportation.

Immediately after the announcement, Dickens wrote to Mitton, 'I think it is an odd title, and therefore a good one'. It was the most provocative title he had yet devised. The need for secrecy is clear; in contrast to titles of Dickens's earlier novels, this is to some extent declarative of purpose and defines a new field of operations. (A 'business' novel, from Boz?) Titles were a special problem for the serial-writer, since no title could be modified to suit a subsequent change of intention: yet readers

[1] This information, not given by any of Dickens's editors or bibliographers, is all available in Forster's *Life*, the Nonesuch *Letters*, and the contemporary press.

must be attracted. Hitherto Dickens had played for safety, usually with the 'life and adventures' type of title; but in this, the first of his novels to be thoroughly designed in advance, he could risk committing himself more deeply. The title promised the fortunes of a firm; while the author's name (although the famous words were as yet unwritten) guaranteed 'the firm of Human Interest Brothers, with a rather large connexion in the fancy goods line'. The title also indicated an increased concern with contemporary life. And possibly the particular collocation 'Dombey *and Son*' suggested the history of a relation between two characters as distinct from the 'life and adventures' of one, and that a relation in two fields, business and domestic. Deliberately, too, the title exploits the serial-writer's special privilege of misleading as well as capturing attention. The evidence of correspondence shows that the whole design of Mr. Dombey's history as a parent had been worked out before the title was announced; and the first number was already written, emphatically concluding with Walter Gay's toast, 'So here's to Dombey—and Son—and Daughter!' The title kept a bigger secret than it disclosed.

Meanwhile, during August, Dickens must have been instructing his illustrator Hablot K. Browne about the cover-design, which was to appear on the first number and be repeated for each monthly instalment; for early in September he approved it as 'very good; perhaps with a little too much in it'. This also was a new departure in the extent to which it foreshadowed the story, though its general method bears an evident relation to the cover of *Chuzzlewit*. Dickens spoke of the *Dombey* cover later as 'shadowing out [the] drift and bearing' of the story,[1] and his choice of phrase is a useful pointer. Previous commentators[2] have interpreted the cover over-literally and have therefore found consistency or inconsistency according to what they thought they saw. The story in its development shows a *general* consistency with the cover, within the elastic limits of a semi-allegorical or 'shadowing' method. The cover-design of *Chuzzlewit* is built up on a system of simple contrasts; roses on the left balance thorns on the right, dream balances nightmare and riches poverty. But there is no narrative line running through these disconnected symbols. In the *Dombey* cover there is such a line, which also suggests part of the moral curve of the narrative. The line of prosperity and promise runs upwards from the left of the centre, through

[1] In a letter of 29 October 1846 on *The Battle of Life*, his current Christmas book.

[2] e.g., Kentley Broomhill, *The Dickensian*, XXXVIII (1942: Autumn Number), pp. 219f; F. G. Kitton, *The Novels of Charles Dickens* (London, 1897), p. 103.

the precariously balanced ledgers, to where the hero sits enthroned in an office chair on the platform of a cash box, and down through the tumbling house of cards on the right. The allegorical scenes at the foot emphasize the turn of Fortune's wheel. Hopeful youth sets out to seek its fortune, with a background of rising sun, smooth-sailing ships, and calm sea; at the other side is the evening of life—a broken-down figure set against a night sky, shipwreck, and storm. At one side, 'rising' Mr. Dombey lightly balances his wealth on brow and thumb; on the other, 'fallen' Mr. Dombey, old and crippled, is nearly crushed by the descending money bags. At the top are more realistic scenes, in general illustration of his seemingly secure prosperity: his hopeful heir (baby with nurse, and boys' classroom); his power in the office; his distinction in public life (a House of Commons scene);[1] and the new turn in his social and domestic fortunes (bridegroom at a society wedding, with a military witness). The figure of Mr. Dombey dominates the whole. Other characters are there only to substantiate his background, and the little goblin-like creatures among the ledgers and cards are as impersonal as the decorations on Doyle's *Punch* cover, from which the inspiration may derive. The figure at the bottom centre certainly bears some relation to the Wooden Midshipman (not, as has been thought, to Sol Gills),[2] but its significance in the 'drift and bearing' surely rests rather on the surrounding symbols of Time, and the blind confidence in the future implied by the closed eye at the telescope. The whole method is allegorical; if readers of the first Number tried to 'look at the end' by scanning the cover they would find little to help them.[3] It would need exceptional discernment even to detect the despised little daughter of chapter I in the young female figure who gently attends the fallen

[1] See below p. 83, n. 1.

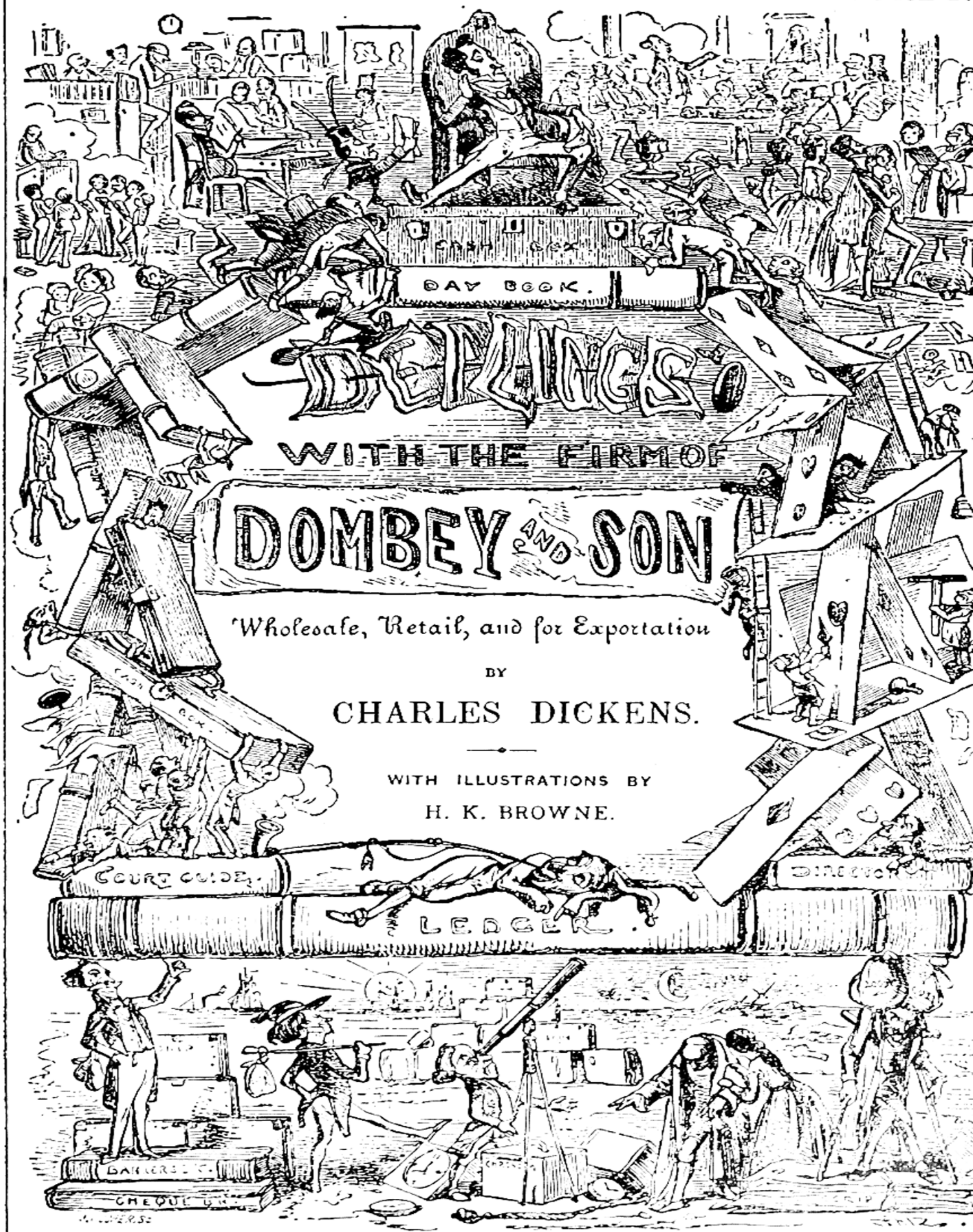
[2] There is no likeness to Sol as he is shown in the plate to chapter IX. But it is conceivable that Browne, when doing the cover, had confused the descriptions of shop-emblem and shop-owner in chapter IV.

[3] The *Athenaeum* reviewer of Nos. I—II (31 October 1846) disclaimed prediction, but commented with some acuteness:

> The title-page reveals something of the prominent idea, in whatever forms embodied, which is intended to be wrought out by the plastic hand of Mr. Dickens in this new work;—and the first chapter confirms the revelation. His hero . . . is to personate one of those representatives of a long commercial line in whose contracted and exclusive minds selfishness takes the quality of reflecting the single figure of its own exclusive importance on all the objects which surround it.

Opposite—*The Front Wrapper to the original edition of* Dombey and Son.

No. VI. MARCH. PRICE 1s



LONDON: BRADBURY & EVANS, WHITEFRIARS.
AGENTS:—J. MENZIES, EDINBURGH; J. MACLEOD, GLASGOW; J. M'GLASHAN, DUBLIN.

Title [redacted]

Author [redacted]

Accession No. [redacted]

Call No. [redacted]

Borrower's No.	Issue Date	Borrower's No.	Issue Date

hero.[1] Secrets are kept—notably the death of Paul. The only specific event predicted is the second marriage; and this is hardly a close secret, since it is already prepared for (though with a false lead as to candidate) in Mrs. Dombey's death and its aftermath. The cover does what Dickens wanted; it 'shadows out the drift and bearing' of the whole, not disclosing secrets, not committing the author, but still picturesquely confirming and enlarging the promise of the title, and clearly showing the existence of a ruling general design for the unwritten story. The novel's centre is the head of a great firm, its main concern is the intertwining of his domestic and his business life (the falling cards are hearts and diamonds), and to this is added the overshadowing, menacing moral—that Pride of Wealth must have a Fall.

Dickens's early letters to Forster confirm this intention, but, since they are private, add more detail of its projected execution. Before the letters begin, conversation with Forster had established one part of the intention; the novel 'was to do with Pride what its predecessor [*Martin Chuzzlewit*] had done with Selfishness', and this presumably is the 'leading idea . . . known to you' of the letter of 12 July. The letters themselves survive only in the extracts Forster selected. But the main document in the case, the letter of 25 July, is probably given with little omission,[2] for Forster printed it in 1873 partly to rehabilitate Dickens as a serious designer, to counter criticisms (such as Taine's) that Paul's death and Mr. Dombey's final relenting were improvised as adventitious aids to interest. This important letter, somewhat similar to the letter of 18 October 1844 sent with the first part of *The Chimes*, is our substitute for a 'master-plan'. In it the design is seen from another angle; the emphasis is almost wholly on the family situation, the dynamic relation between Dombey and Son and Daughter. Florence here takes the prominent place deliberately and ironically withheld from her in title and picture.[3]

[1] This may have been where Dickens found 'a little too much in' the cover, if by this remark he meant that it was too revealing and not merely too crowded.

[2] The omissions are Forsters'; one may have concerned the second marriage.

[3] It is accorded to her in the frontispiece to the first edition, which first appeared as one of the plates in the concluding double Number. This is another semi-allegorical composition, summarizing the novel in retrospect, when the need for keeping secrets is past. Florence occupies the centre, seated on a sea-beach beside Paul's wheel-chair. Above, an angel points upwards to a heavenly choir; and below, a rough sea beats against the shore. Besides taking precedence over Paul in the central scene, Florence also appears in most of the surrounding scenes—at the two deathbeds, with Polly, with Edith, struck down by Mr. Dombey, welcoming the literally shipwrecked Walter, and rescuing her symbolically shipwrecked father.

> I will now go on to give you an outline of my immediate intentions in reference to *Dombey*. I design to show Mr. D. with that one idea of the Son taking firmer and firmer possession of him, and swelling and bloating his pride to a prodigious extent. As the boy begins to grow up, I shall show him quite impatient for his getting on, and urging his masters to set him great tasks, and the like. But the natural affection of the boy will turn towards the despised sister; and I purpose showing her learning all sorts of things, of her own application and determination, to assist him in his lessons: and helping him always. When the boy is about ten years old (in the fourth number), he will be taken ill, and will die; and when he is ill, and when he is dying, I mean to make him turn always for refuge to the sister still, and keep the stern affection of the father at a distance. So Mr. Dombey—for all his greatness, and for all his devotion to the child—will find himself at arms' length from him even then; and will see that his love and confidence are all bestowed upon his sister, whom Mr. Dombey has used—and so has the boy himself too, for that matter—as a mere convenience and handle to him. The death of the boy is a death-blow, of course, to all the father's schemes and cherished hopes; and 'Dombey and Son', as Miss Tox will say at the end of the number, 'is a Daughter after all.' . . . From that time, I purpose changing his feeling of indifference and uneasiness towards his daughter into a positive hatred. For he will always remember how the boy had his arm round her neck when he was dying, and whispered to her, and would take things only from her hand, and never thought of him. . . . At the same time, I shall change *her* feeling towards *him* for one of a greater desire to love him, and to be loved by him; engendered in her compassion for his loss, and her love for the dead boy whom, in his way, he loved so well too. So I mean to carry the story on, through all the branches and off-shoots and meanderings that come up; and through the decay and downfall of the house, and the bankruptcy of Dombey, and all the rest of it; when his only staff and treasure, and his unknown Good Genius always, will be this rejected daughter, who will come out better than any son at last, and whose love for him, when discovered and understood, will be his bitterest reproach. For the struggle with himself, which goes on in all such obstinate natures, will have ended then; and the sense of his injustice, which you may be sure has never quitted him, will have at last a gentler office than that of only making him more harshly unjust.

This forecasts the main development up to about the seventh Number ('positive hatred' is clearest in chapter xx), and the references to the downfall of the firm and the redemptive power of Florence's persistent love reach forward to the close. (The prediction is fulfilled, save for the hinted active role for Florence). The heart of the design is now exposed: the theme is the opposition of pride and love, with Mr. Dombey as the

meeting-point. The novel is thus to be a new departure for Dickens—a novel founded upon a relation, and upon a character's inner conflict.

The letter goes on to mention only two minor characters, Susan Nipper and Polly Toodle (who are to 'go over' to Florence, 'like everybody else'.) Dickens sums up his outline as 'the stock of the soup', to which 'all sorts of things will be added'. It was 'stock' in the sense that it would not change;[1] doubts and deliberations affected other persons—notably Walter Gay—but not Mr. Dombey, Paul, and Florence.

The 'stock', the main design, already posed a problem to which Dickens perhaps did not yet penetrate: the interweaving of Dombey's domestic and business fortunes. This interweaving is achieved, partly by chapter headings, in the first few Numbers, but it wears thin after Paul's death, and Carker, who had probably been designed as the canker of both office and family, becomes much more prominent in the latter capacity.

III

So far as Paul's death the way lay clear ahead and the Number-plans record little that can be interpreted as hesitation. Proofs and letters to Forster show that the chief difficulty was to find space for all that needed saying. Paul, the 'Boy born, to die' (in the words of the first Number-plan) was originally to die at the end of Number IV, but the pace in the first two Numbers was so leisurely that Forster was asked, while III was being planned, whether Paul should not be killed in V. Even this respite was not sufficient, for each of the first four Numbers proved to be overwritten by amounts varying from one page to six. When faced with the need of extensive cuts at proof stage, Dickens was accustomed to economize at the expense of the comedy. The luxuriant growth of fancy displayed in Mrs. Chick and Major Bagstock was accordingly pruned;[2]

[1] This is interestingly confirmed by an entry in the diary of the Hon. Mrs. Watson, who records on 12 September 'a Soiree at Mr. Dickens to hear him read the first number . . . The career of Dombey, Son, and Daughter are settled, but I think none of the others'. (*The Dickensian*, XLVII, (December 1950), p. 18).

[2] Readers who enjoy the partnership of Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox will regret that Dickens could find no room for the following passage, (deleted in proof from chapter VIII), in which Mrs. Chick once more insinuates Miss Tox's claims on Mr. Dombey's serious consideration:

'My dear Paul,' returned Mrs. Chick, 'with your usual discrimination, which I am weak enough to envy you, every time I am in your company; and so I think is Miss Tox——'

Continued overleaf

but passages of greater significance were removed as well. One of them, describing Mr. Dombey's destruction of a letter written by his dead wife, was retrieved by Forster (VI. 2), who regarded it as evidence 'thus early . . . of the struggle with itself that such pride must always go through'. Less ambiguous are Mr. Dombey's comments (ch. 1) when Florence disregards his invitation to 'go and look at [her] pretty brother':

> 'Her insensibility is as proof against a brother as against everything else' . . . and he seemed so confirmed in a previous opinion by the discovery, as to be quite glad of it,

and the 'expression of positive pain—pain that was suffering to him; that he could not conceal, and was ashamed to show' which appeared in Mr. Dombey's face (ch. XI) as he confided to Mrs. Pipchin that Paul had concentrated too much of his childish affection on his sister. Perhaps nothing essential to our understanding of the novel's purpose was lost by cuts such as these, but the book as we now have it is weaker by some distinct loss of emphasis.

Restrictions of space were also felt in other ways. The third Number-plan (chs. VIII–X) shows that Miss Tox was to have given a party at which 'Her uncle the Magistrate' (a character who never appeared, though already named in chapter V to impress Towlinson and the cabman) and 'The Major' were to have been present and would have been introduced, we may safely assume, to Mr. Dombey. Carker was also to appear in this Number, and the 'Offices in the City' were to have been described, for it was time for the firm to take a larger share of the reader's attention. But there was no room in Number III and the two scenes were marked in the Plan 'To stand over'. The party was never to take place; Major Bagstock, however, characteristically introduced himself to Mr. Dombey at Brighton later in this Number (ch. X). Thus the irony of Miss Tox presenting the man who was to undermine her position in the Dombey household was necessarily dropped; but the change seems to square with the general intention of reducing Miss Tox from her prominence in the opening Numbers. A description of the counting-house was deferred till the next Number, and meanwhile the glimpse of

> 'Oh my dear!' said Miss Tox, softly, 'how could it be otherwise. Presumptuous as it is to aspire to such a level; still, if the bird of night may—but I'll not trouble Mr. Dombey with the sentiment. It merely relates to the Bulbul.'
>
> Mr. Dombey bent his head in stately recognition of the Bulbul as an old-established body.

Dombey and Son in a business transaction is supplied by the loan of money to 'pay out' the broker at the Little Midshipman's. 'You will consider that it is done by Master Paul', says Mr. Dombey, as he hands the note to Walter. This is his effective answer at the end of the Number to the question, so simple yet so powerful in irony, which Paul had asked at the beginning, 'Papa! What's money . . . what can it do?'

Restricted though he was for space, Dickens might have had room for the scenes marked 'to stand over' if he had fully determined what to do with Walter Gay. The notion of showing Walter 'gradually and naturally trailing away . . . into negligence, idleness, dissipation, dishonesty, and ruin'[1] required an appropriate setting of characters. We know that Florence was to have been 'always at the bottom of it', and we may suspect that Carker the Junior would also have played an important part. '"The strangest man, Mr. Carker the junior is"', Walter is made to remark to Florence, as he conducts her (ch. VI) to his uncle's shop;

> 'If you could understand what an extraordinary interest he takes in me, and yet how he shuns and avoids me; and what a low place he holds in our office, and how he is never advanced, and never complains, though year after year he sees young men passed over his head . . . you would be as much puzzled about him as I am.'

The passage was removed in proof after Dickens had decided to reserve Walter for a happier future, but it remains to motivate a character who is unnecessary to the story as it developed. We may be sure that Carker the Junior's 'extraordinary interest' in Walter Gay was an interest in a young man who was to fall as he had fallen.

Dickens told Forster that he could also 'bring out Solomon Gills and Captain Cuttle well, through such a history' of deterioration as Walter's might have been. Cuttle remains an important figure in Walter's happier fate. But Gills, whose heart seems made to be broken, had no place in Dickens's revised intentions. He could only duplicate Cuttle's rôle, so he is cleared off at an early opportunity. 'Uncle Sol to die?' Dickens enquires in the eighth Number-plan (chs. XXIII–XXV); but though he immediately relents ('No, run away, to look after Walter'), he can find no use for him until the eighteenth Number (ch. LVI) when he returns to crown the happiness of Walter and Florence.

[1] From the close of the letter of 25 July. Forster, so often a check to Dickens's gloomier notions, represents himself as responsible for discouraging Dickens from this plan, 'for reasons that need not be dwelt on here'; one may guess that they were connected with sales, perhaps also with the danger of too close portrayal of some actual person.

But these are blemishes in an otherwise faultless exposition. Our attention is mainly directed to 'that one idea of the Son taking firmer and firmer possession of [Mr. Dombey], and swelling and bloating his pride to a prodigious extent'. The theme of Pride is developed not merely in the father's regard for his son, in the 'family humbug' of Mrs. Chick, and in the use of honest and dishonest toadies, Tox and Bagstock, but is expounded with remarkable thoroughness in Mr. Dombey's treatment of his social inferiors, Polly Toodle and her son. He would make the relations between Paul and his wet nurse 'a mere matter of bargain and sale. . . . It is not at all in this bargain that you need become attached to my child, or that my child need become attached to you. I don't expect or desire anything of the kind. Quite the reverse'. Dickens, we may be sure, has already determined upon an affectionate relationship between Paul and Polly even though he may not have foreseen the incident where Paul summons his old nurse to comfort him on his death bed, or the still later scene when all Mr. Dombey's dependants have left his house and Polly returns to look after him. So closely are we bound together, Dickens implies, despite what a sense of class can do to separate us. Polly's immediate recompense for her services was to have her eldest son nominated to a vacancy in the Charitable Grinders' School, where Mr. Dombey was assured that he would be taught to know his position and conduct himself properly. Again we may safely infer that Dickens relished the retribution in store for Mr. Dombey, though he might not then have decided precisely how Rob the Grinder would assist Mr. Dombey's enemy. But he shows that he was keeping Rob's development in sight by placing in Mrs. Chick's mouth the solemn and ironic rebuke:

> 'If it was *my* ungrateful case . . . and I had *your* reflections, Richards, I should feel as if the Charitable Grinders' dress would blight my child, and the education choke him.'

A reader need not be particularly shrewd to suspect that Pride of such a kind will have a fall. He might forecast Mr. Dombey's bankruptcy and expect that in some way Paul would disappoint his father. But Paul's death was intended as 'a great surprise', and Dickens thought his friend Mrs. Marcet was clever to have guessed it when he read the first Number to her. In Number II it is clearly enough forecast in the chill of the christening and the ominous conclusion of chapter v: but already in Number I, the distinction drawn by Susan Nipper—'Miss Floy being a permanency, Master Paul a temporary'—carries ironic overtones.[1]

[1] But the secret is not betrayed, since the words could be read with Susan's own meaning—the necessary impermanence of the suckling period and so of the wet-nurse.

In the same sentence in which Dickens told Forster of the 'great surprise', he spoke of 'a new and peculiar sort of interest, involving the necessity of a little bit of delicate treatment'. It is possible that he was looking ahead to Paul's final illness in Number V (ch. XIV) and the decision recorded in the Number-plan that 'His illness [should be] only expressed in the child's own feelings—Not otherwise described'. It is reasonable to suppose that it was the novelty of this treatment that brought tears to the eyes of so many readers.[1]

Meanwhile the 'neglected daughter' motif of the plan has been steadily developed throughout the first Number, though its importance is not realized until we reach the last chapter (ch. IV). That was the chapter which Dickens at one point thought of removing when he discovered that the Number was too long. The alternative was to substitute a shorter version of what later became chapter VII (where Major Bagstock is introduced as Miss Tox's neighbour in Princess's Place). It is altogether fortunate that this was not done, for pleasing as chapter VII is it does not open up such possibilities in the development of character and theme as chapter IV. Here is our first glimpse of the firm of Dombey and Son, seen from the point of view of a promising young recruit; and (though Dickens was still undecided whether to disappoint Walter's prospects) here is the young 'Sir Richard Whittington [who] married his master's daughter'. Sol Gills and Captain Cuttle admit that 'the Son's a little in our way, at present', but the chapter and the Number end with the toast 'So here's to Dombey—and Son—and Daughter!' Thus the importance of 'Dombey and Daughter' is emphasized from the very beginning; and lest we should overlook it, that toast is echoed at the end of Number V (ch. XVI), which concludes the first movement of the novel:

> 'Dear me, dear me! To think,' said Miss Tox, bursting out afresh that night, as if her heart were broken, 'that Dombey and Son should be a Daughter after all!'[2]

[1] It was also in keeping with Dickens's decision to take the child's point of view so far as possible, notably in the Brighton scenes both at Mrs. Pipchin's boarding-house and at Dr. Blimber's academy. This also was 'a new and peculiar sort of interest', and its success no doubt prompted the extension of this treatment in his next novel, *David Copperfield*.

[2] The sentence is dropped from all editions after 1858, except the two reprints of the first edition (Macmillan, 1892–5, and Glasgow, n.d.). See K. Tillotson, 'A Lost Sentence in *Dombey and Son*', *The Dickensian*, XLVII, 2 (Mar. 1951), pp. 81f.

IV

The Plan of Number VI begins with an important memorandum for the second movement of the novel, 'Great point of the No. to throw the interest of Paul, at once on Florence'[1] and accordingly the whole of Number VI (chs. XVII–XIX) is devoted to this. Chapter XVIII, originally intended to open the Number (but moved, presumably to avoid two successive Cuttle chapters), is given the half-misleading title 'Father and Daughter'. The two should be drawn together by Paul's death; instead there is first cold neglect, then open repudiation of the child's timid advance. The latter is kept subdued, by a cautious memorandum

> not to make too much of the scene with the father, or it may be too painful.

Accordingly, some suspense remains; there is no open break. This is important to the other aspect of Florence's status—she is now the possible 'heir' to the firm, and the interest is also 'thrown' on her by hints of the webs being spun round her. Though this is not shown as part of Mr. Dombey's consciousness, and indeed is never really explicit, it is henceforth a vital contribution to the course of the narrative, and a means of foreshadowing its close. Number VI, in which to all appearances Florence's fortunes are steeply declining (Paul dead, Walter going abroad, her father slighting her), contains also a clear hint of how the firm is to be perpetuated—she asks Walter to be a brother to her, and he sails in the *Son and Heir*. And—a brilliant stroke of economy—Captain Cuttle artlessly reveals his fairy-tale hopes to Carker, who now dawns on the reader as Walter's rival:

> 'There's a son gone; pretty little creatur. Ain't there?'
> 'Yes, there's a son gone,' said the acquiescent Carker.
> 'Pass the word, and there's another ready for you.'
>
> (ch. XVII)

[1] Jeffrey's complimentary letter of 31 January 1847 must have been in one respect disquieting: 'After reaching this climax in the fifth number, what are you to do with the fifteen that are to follow? (Lord Cockburn, *Life of Lord Jeffrey*, 1852, ii. 407). After receiving it, Dickens wrote to Forster: 'To transfer to Florence, instantly, all the previous interest, is what I am aiming at. For that, all sorts of other points must be thrown aside in this number.'

When Carker thinks (in the next chapter) of 'some obstacle removed' he has Walter as well as Paul in mind. All this is unemphasized, but carefully planted; it is followed up in the next two Numbers by Carker's setting his spy on Florence's visits to Sol Gills (ch. XXII) and his seeking her out at the Skettleses (ch. XXIV).

But the situation has the triplicity of fairy-tale; the 'king's fair daughter under a spell' has three suitors—Fairy Prince, Demon King, and Fool. Number VI also re-introduces Mr. Toots, whose visit with the gift of Diogenes does most to 'throw the interest on Florence', while also maintaining the link with Paul and Blimber's Academy. And by closing the Number with the symbolic incident of Toots's meeting with Carker on Mr. Dombey's doorstep, and Diogenes' instinctive bite, Dickens emphasizes the reassuring effect of the protective squire. Mr. Toots makes no appearance in the original plan, and never figures prominently in the Number-plans; but he is perhaps the most tasty of the 'all sorts of things' that were 'added to' the stock of the soup.

Florence is again the centre of Number VIII (chs. XXIII–XXV). On one of her few excursions into the world, her visit to the Skettleses (of whom surely more was meant to be made),[1] she observes and overhears things that sharpen her sense of deprivation; and her desirability as a match is reiterated. The three suitors are not forgotten; Toots rows past Fulham, Carker pays his sinister call, and brings bad news of the *Son and Heir*. With her prominence fairly established, Dickens can devote himself to the more dynamic relationship of Mr. Dombey, Edith Granger, and Carker (Numbers VII and IX). Since the early stages of the plan say nothing of the second marriage, we may guess that it grew under Dickens's hand, partly from its intrinsic interest (and especially the possibilities he finds in Edith), partly from the unforeseen limitations of Florence as a plot-producing character. Her silent presence modifies all events, and much revolves round her; but her rôle is to feel and inspire (in all save her father) admiration and affection and to suffer from his neglect. Her very virtues, as well as her age and social status, preclude her from taking any initiative.

The second marriage is the real storm-centre of the novel. Mr. Dombey's courtship is presented as we should expect—in the shape of a business deal. He is ready to buy a wife with 'blood' and accomplishments, to grace his house and provide him with another son (and, as one

[1] The snobbish and ambitious Sir Barnet was an M.P., and the cover shows Mr. Dombey speaking in the House. Parliament does have its share in the novel, but only through the faded reminiscences of Cousin Feenix.

symbolic piece of description suggests, to stand between him and his daughter).[1] He meets a woman who is prepared to be bought: this is how the notes for Number VII prepare for Mrs. Skewton and Edith Granger:

> The mother and daughter. The mother, and her cant about 'heart', and nature— Daughter who has been put through her paces, before countless marrying men, like a horse for sale— Proud and weary of her degradation, but going on, for it's too late now, to try to turn back.

The social implications do not escape Dickens;[2] and he develops them ironically by providing a counterpart to Edith in Alice Marwood, introduced in Number XI (ch. XXIII) but prepared for as early as Number II, when Good Mrs. Brown, the kidnapper of Florence, speaks of 'a gal of my own—beyond seas now—that was proud of her hair'. The difference in social status is as nothing to the identity of the situation; Dickens evidently asked, like his contemporary Florence Nightingale,

> The woman who has sold herself for an establishment, in what is she superior to those one may not name?[3]

Carker is connected with both; he has been the agent of Alice's degradation (another social point is made when she nevertheless refuses to take his money) and schemes to be that of Edith's; her recognition that he can read her thoroughly is the climax of Number IX[4] (chs. XXVI–XXVIII), whose business was, in the words of the plan:

> To bring on the marriage gradually—connect Carker with Edith, *before the wedding*, and get in Florence.

Florence is 'got in' (ch. XXVIII) by the scene in which Edith treats her with affection, and the complex of relationships is thus completed. We shall see how Edith's sole escape from 'degradation' is through her affection for Florence, which proves no escape since it turns Mr. Dombey

[1] Near the end of chapter XX ('He saw her image . . . what was there he could interpose between himself and it?')

[2] It was at just this time (1846–7) that he was corresponding with Miss Burdett-Coutts about her scheme for establishing a Home for Fallen Women.

[3] In 'Cassandra', written about 1852, and first published as Appendix to Ray Strachey's *The Cause* (1928), p. 412.

[4] Singled out for emphasis in the plan '*First interview between Carker and Edith. Very important*'.

more against them both; how it leads him in his sultan-like pride to use Carker as his emissary, thus allowing Carker to strengthen his hold upon Edith. The situation is wonderfully planned for its ultimate purpose—the 'fall' and late enlightenment of Mr. Dombey. But though the main design is still kept in view, the 'thickening' of the situation here raised some problems for Dickens, and he was driven to unforeseen economies among characters who could not directly contribute to it. Florence's protectors and 'reflectors' (Nipper, Toots, Cuttle) must of course remain; but Mrs. Chick will have to give way, though in a superbly comic scene (ch. XXIX). Major Bagstock and Mrs. Skewton, having served their purpose by contriving the marriage, will not reap their expected reward,[1] which the Major's words promise in chapter XXVI: 'Cleopatra the peerless, and her Antony Bagstock . . . sharing the elegance and wealth of Edith Dombey's establishment.'

More important still, there will be no room for the firm, until Mr. Morfin appears in Number XVII (ch. LIII; after waiting in the wings since Number XIII, when he first appears in the Number-plans, 'to stand over') and 'shadows forth Mr. Dombey's ruin'. This shrinking of the firm is perhaps the one considerable modification of the main design; the letter to Forster had hinted at an almost symmetrical rise-and-fall line for the firm's fortunes; in the event, the 'decay and downfall of the house', and the 'bankruptcy of Dombey' are not only deferred until very late (to the closing double Number) but occur in an unchronicled year, just before chapter LVIII ('After a Lapse'). The moral shape of the novel, however, is not really affected; the pervasive suggestion remains that a family cannot be run on business lines; Mr. Dombey's fall still begins from the story's mid-point, his second marriage; the hastener of the catastrophe is still the 'trusty agent', 'Mr. Carker the Manager'.

V

The converging lines that lead towards both catastrophe and resolution first stand out clearly in Number XIII (chs. XXXIX–XLI). The Number caused trouble in the writing—'it requires to be so carefully done';[2] for it must mark clearly (though not coarsely) the breakdown of

[1] The shift in emphasis comes in the plan for chapter XXXI, where the Major is deleted as proposed speechmaker at the wedding in favour of Cousin Feenix. This is more plausible, and also prepares for Cousin Feenix's final vindication of the family honour.

[2] Letter to Forster, 12 September 1847.

the marriage. The climax of the big central chapter, 'Domestic Relations', is a show-down between the two whom we now see as 'mighty opposites' in pride, Mr. Dombey and Edith; its setting is 'her own apartment', which he will not see again until 'a very different occasion'—one of many indications that her flight with Carker was already designed. The catastrophe is also prepared for by further isolation of the four main characters; Mrs. Skewton is to die, Mrs. Pipchin to be installed as housekeeper (which will mean the routing of her old enemy Nipper, and thus leave Florence unprotected). All this is calculated in the notes: as is also the confronting of the two base mothers and their proud degraded daughters, which, contrived and theatrical though it is, again foreshadows Edith's fate.

This is the half-way point; it is time not only to provide for the future, but to round back upon the past. Themes of the first movement reappear: Mrs. Skewton is taken in her fatal illness to Brighton, Blimber's Academy is revisited, and voices in the waves are heard once more.

Chapter XLI was a calm before storm; events now hurry to the catastrophe, the flight of Edith and Carker, which first appears in the plans in the note on chapter XLV (Number XIV). The rôle devised for Edith is that of an unwilling adulteress, still claiming the reader's sympathy in her resistance to a doubly intolerable situation, and meeting her final defeat only when her one refuge—her love for Florence—is turned into a weapon against them both. 'She . . . relenting by force' is the note for chapter XLV;[1] a little later he wrote to Forster, 'Of course she hates Carker . . . I have relied upon that very much for the effect of her death'. He was then writing the chapters just before the elopement; his change of plan for Edith was late, but he was unconsciously prepared for it. For in engaging the reader's sympathies he had entrapped his own, and so was ready to welcome one influential reader's incredulity at Edith's guilt, as an excuse to swerve from his course. But this was later; when he was leading up to and describing the elopement he still designed Edith for guilt, and consequently a repentant deathbed—we may guess, with Florence at her bedside, matching Harriet, whose main function is to attend at Alice's and to forgive.[2] The reader would not suspect the change of plan; Dickens's hold on his main design conceals the swerve of

[1] Before proofs showed that a cut was necessary, the chapter ended by emphasizing her despair: "'If he has spoken truth, she is lost to me, and I have no hope left.'"

[2] Foreshadowed in Alice's 'I'll thank you when I die' at the end of chapter XXXIV.

his intention. This is an 'offshoot', if not a 'meandering'; the fall of pride and its redemption are unaffected by it.

From the opening of Number XIV the pace quickens in both plot and counterplot. The 'headline' note in the plan is 'Carker employed as go-between to reduce proud Edith'; and this manoeuvre is accelerated by the riding accident, which immobilizes Mr. Dombey in the downstairs apartments and gains Carker unhampered admission to Edith. It also gives an opportunity for Nipper to speak her mind, Paulina-like, so that a good reason is supplied for her banishment; and with Mr. Toots as appointed escort, a consolation prize is prepared for the faithful squire; not the rose, but something that grows near it. The finer threads in the pattern are never forgotten. Susan Nipper's explosion is a double preparation for Florence's flight; it isolates her, and also, through its substance, seems a casting-up of accounts, preparing for the final reckoning. And it follows Florence's first doubts of her father (ch. XLIII).

All was ready for Number XV (chs. XLVI–XLVIII). But in the original plan 'The Thunderbolt' would have fallen last, making the Number conclude with Florence's stricken flight, but not its destination and consolation. The serial reader would then have remained in horrified suspense through December 1847. But as the chapter was written first, Dickens had time to change his mind; 'to leave a pleasanter impression on the reader' (had he perhaps the Christmas season in mind?) he pushed this chapter back into the middle place, and added the chapter (XLVIII) which shows Florence safely under Captain Cuttle's protection, with mystified but not mystifying hints from Toots of 'a person' awaiting him round the corner. (The note is 'Preparation for Walter'). The first chapter (ch. XLVI)[1] was ostensibly a 'counterplot' chapter, opening with Carker's diligence at business and closing with his vengeful vision of Edith; it nevertheless prepares ingeniously for his defeat, for he is recognized by Good Mrs. Brown, and is warned that his brother is watching Mr. Dombey's interests. We may observe that Dickens had not yet decided to use Edith herself as a means of Carker's defeat, for diligence at business suggested to the Stock Exchange 'that Jem was going to marry a rich widow'; and, for contrast with Edith in her degradation, Alice once more appears refusing to touch any money which Carker has to

[1] The letter of 19 November 1847 seems to suggest that as originally planned the first chapters (when 'The Thunderbolt' came last) were to be 'light'. But Forster is here perplexing, for he refers to the writing of the 'fourteenth' Number, which was already published. It is late even for the writing of Number XV; perhaps date and not reference is mistaken.

bestow. The views of the Stock Exchange can be interpreted ironically in the light of what is to come; but there are no ironic overtones in the last long paragraph of this chapter, which summarizes the 'slow and sure degrees' by which Edith was to become Carker's mistress and was thus to obtain

> the dark retaliation [i.e., upon Mr. Dombey], whose faintest shadow seen once and shuddered at, and never seen again, would have been sufficient stain upon her soul.

Number XVII is now prepared for, and the intervening Number XVI (chs. XLIX–LI) can be mainly devoted to the idyll of Florence and Walter; the solitary general note is 'Return of Walter', and this dominates the Number. Dickens had privately prepared for the betrothal in a way which reveals his care over detail, and the peculiar problems of the serial-writer. Before writing chapter XLVII, he went over earlier Numbers from VI onwards working out Florence's age, and satisfied himself that she could be 'almost seventeen'. Her age is then specified in that chapter, with a reference to her diminished hopes of her father's love and to 'the change from childhood to womanhood'.[1] It was necessary to 'bring on' Florence's marriage, partly to remove her from the scene of action and partly so that the third generation might arrive in time for the reconciliation. But while it is suitable for the balance of interest[2] that the actual wedding should be deferred till Number XVIII (ch. LVII) this involves Dickens in another time-problem: what to do with the year which nature dictates, when he has only five chapters left. The closing chapter of Number XVI is another 'pause', a quiet preparation for the final rush of events around Mr. Dombey, Carker and Edith. In 'Mr. Dombey and the World' the full irony of the proud man's exposure is brought out, by presenting him in his humiliation through a series of choruses; as the notes summarize it:

> The Major & Cousin Feenix / The clerks—the city—Perch / Miss Tox / The servants.

The dominant theme of Number XVII (chs. LII–LIV) is pursuit;

[1] Dickens also in these notes works out the duration of the second marriage, which he puts at exactly two years; which is longer, perhaps, than accords with the reader's impression (for by this calendar eighteen months must elapse from chapter XL to chapter XLVII) but is not contradicted by any of the time-indications.

[2] Number XVII is the only Number in the whole novel in which Florence neither appears nor is mentioned.

the notes reiterate it—'pervading the number'—and each of the three chapters is built up to a 'pursuit-ending, *quick and fierce*'. Mr. Morfin, at last justifying his dim existence, tells the good Carkers about their brother, 'shadowing forth Mr. Dombey's ruin', and incidentally revealing Dickens's modification of his first design:

> The distractions of death, courtship, marriage, and domestic unhappiness, have left us no head but your brother for this long, long time.

That is, for nearly three years, and three-quarters of the novel, Mr. Dombey has neglected Dombey and Son, and Dickens has let private life overrun his 'business' novel. The situation has its own irony, but the cover and the letter to Forster are evidence that it was not what was originally intended.

Number XVII concludes with the great chapter of Edith's repudiation of Carker at Dijon; here the change of plan already noted[1] was devised only three weeks before the Number went to press. On 21 December 1847 Dickens wrote to Forster:

> Note from Jeffrey[2] this morning who won't believe (positively refuses) that Edith is Carker's mistress. [Jeffrey had read chapter XLVII, published at the beginning of the month]. What do you think of a kind of inverted Maid's Tragedy, and a tremendous scene of her undeceiving Carker, and giving him to know that she never meant that?

Forster agreed, and it went down in the notes—'Edith *not* his mistress'. Jeffrey's protest provided occasion rather than cause; the change chimed with Dickens's own view of Edith, who 'hates Carker in the most deadly degree', and whose revenge is only thus completed. The change also lightened his task in the closing numbers; the business of the self-explanation, repentance and death of an Edith guilty in fact as well as appearance could hardly have been enclosed in the shambling amiabilities of Cousin Feenix, and must have left a lingering shadow on Florence's happiness. The diagrammatic equivalence between Alice and Edith, already overemphasized by the revelation of their cousinship in chapter LVIII, would have been too starkly obtruded. And, not least in importance, by this change of plan Carker's isolation in evil is sustained to his end.

[1] See p. 86 above.

[2] This note has not survived.

The first chapter of Number XVIII, with its brilliantly half-revealing title 'Rob the Grinder loses his place', not only wipes out Carker; by concentrating upon the progress of his flight, swift yet protracted, it emphasizes one of the big transitions in the narrative, even as Mr. Dombey's railway journey to Leamington had done. The same devices are even repeated—the whirling thoughts that accompany the wheels, the symbolically intended railway junction. But this journey makes a full stop; with it the only irredeemable evil in the novel's world is abolished—not merely destroyed, but torn to fragments.

VI

There could be no doubt in either author's or reader's mind about the general content of the closing chapters (chs. LVIII–LXII, in the final 'double Number', XIX–XX). The main action must fulfil itself in the undermining of Mr. Dombey's pride from within and his reconciliation with Florence, and there must be news of all the other characters, as satisfactory as their conditions and deserts allow, leading to a final fireside or sunset glow. There was, however, the problem of time: for that reconciliation to carry conviction, time must not only pass but be felt to pass, and it must be the time of heart-throbs as well as clocks and calendars. Mr. Dombey has been unseen, save for oblique glimpses, for several chapters; we are behindhand even with events, still more with his response to them. He is now to be seen at close quarters after a year has passed; but not at once. The first chapter (ch. LVIII) seems leisurely and quiet, but is packed with useful information. Its purpose is to expound the changed situation, both by narrative and dialogue, to give Mr. Dombey his final prominence, first through choric commentary from Mr. Perch, Major Bagstock, and Mrs. Chick, then more fully through the conversation of Harriet and Mr. Morfin, which also ties in many other loose ends. (Dickens's instinct for economy leads him, while he has Harriet in hand, to dispose of her consoling visit to Alice's repentant deathbed, though she is not an obvious confidante for Good Mrs. Brown's revelation of family history). Turning from the world and the firm to the 'great house in the long dull street' (ch. LIX), the approach to Mr. Dombey is still gradual, through the chorus of the 'kitchen council',[1] the sale, the refrain 'the house is a ruin and the rats fly from it', and the

[1] From Dickens's running title added in the edition of 1867. The intention was calculated; in the Number-plan for X he notes 'carry on the servants as a sort of odd chorus to the story', and he had indeed already initiated this in earlier chapters.

glimpse of Toodle and Tox, ghosts of past loyalty lurking in the shadows. A bare five pages are devoted to Mr. Dombey himself, but so thorough has been the preparation, and so concentrated and searching is the light shed upon him as he roams the memory-haunted house, that the picture of his fallen pride seems to dominate the entire Number. The main design is at last fulfilled,

> for the struggle within himself, which goes on in all such obstinate natures, will have ended then,

and so intense is our sense of his retributive suffering that the almost theatrically opportune return of Florence can be accepted as morally earned. Miss Tox's last comment, with its echo ('So Dombey and Son, as I observed upon a certain sad occasion, is really a daughter after all!') draws a concluding line under the climax. The notes in the plan include 'q^y order of chapters'; but there is no doubt that chapter LIX is rightly placed.[1] The stage is now left clear for the final grouping of the other characters, whom Dickens's plan conscientiously lists for a final round-up, with ticks added when they had been disposed of. Not one was forgotten,[2] not even Master Bitherstone and Miss Pankey, though the Skettleses and the last glimpse of Miss Tox were inserted only at proof stage. The return to Brighton (ch. LX) helps to link the final chapters to the close of the first movement, and again enforces the sense of passing time, and of changelessness in change. The detail of Mr. Bunsby's wedding is at first sight surprising in its amplitude; but apart from the attraction of one broadly comic scene at the close, it makes an adequate last appearance for that somewhat petted character Captain Cuttle. There is no one for him to marry, so we must be shown by means of this awful warning how glad he is to have escaped marriage.

But throughout the 'matrimonial' winding-up the epilogue of Florence and her father is kept before us; the movement of chapter LX is traced in the notes, with a final lead back to the central figures:

> Open with Blimber's—lead to Bunsby, through the Captain, & end with Susan and Florence.

[1] Possibly the original intention was to include a Florence-chapter; the first note is 'The birth of Florence's child and her relenting towards her father', then 'The scene in his own room'.

[2] At least of the humans; and the dog Diogenes was remembered a week before publication. Dickens wrote to Forster (25 March 1848) asking for him to be inserted in proof, and a brief addition stands on the last page of the proof sheet: 'and an old dog is generally in their company'.

Mr. Dombey's illness (predicted on the cover) is persuasively used to emphasize his change of heart, and is also an excuse to 'distance' him, so that even our glimpse of him in recovery, improbably clinking glasses with Captain Cuttle (like Scrooge at the Cratchits'), does not seem incongruous.

One item on the agenda of the plan was doubtful; the note shows an unexpected hesitation over the meeting between Edith and Florence:

> Edith—q^y Edith and Florence—certainly, Edith and Cousin Feenix. *Yes, all three.*

Edith has her just place; shadowed herself,[1] but removing the one remaining shadow on Florence. The substance and style of their speeches could be predicted; but the scene draws a surprising extra vitality from the rôle of Cousin Feenix. His gentility is at last revealed as the genuine article (Edith is to reveal the truth 'not for the honour of the family . . . but because it *is* wrong, and not right'), and his oratory is for the first time effectual; but he retains all his native absurdity, and while ministering to the mood of the epilogue he is not subdued (as is Nipper) into a mere contributor to the chorus.

Echoes reverberate in the closing Number; incidents and scenes are recalled, themes reappear, dominant images and even words are repeated.[2] But one echo planned for the conclusion of the final chapter was removed in proof:

> End with the sea—carrying through, what the waves were always saying, and the invisible country far away.[3]

[1] The gradations of poetic justice are delicate; her destination is the South of Italy, whereas little Emily must go to Australia.

[2] e.g., Miss Tox's comment, quoted above, and 'Let him remember it in that room, years to come'; the latter also the caption of an illustration.

[3] In correcting proof Dickens had to reduce his Number by seven lines, yet wished to find room for Skettles and Miss Tox. It was the last two paragraphs he chose to sacrifice. They read as follows:

'The voices in the waves speak low to him of Florence, day and night—plainest when he, his blooming daughter, and her husband, walk beside them in the evening, or sit at an open window, listening to their roar. They speak to him of Florence and his altered heart; of Florence and their ceaseless murmuring to her of the love, eternal and illimitable, extending still, beyond the sea, beyond the sky, to the invisible country far away.

'Never from the mighty sea may voices rise too late, to come between us and the unseen region on the other shore! Better, far better, that they whispered of that region in our childish ears, and the swift river hurried us away!'

That popular sentiment which added an apocryphal wildness to the waves in a drawing-room song might have preferred it so. But the conclusion is comparatively restrained, and comes no nearer that echo than a last 'long shot' of the sea-beach in autumn, and a natural grandfatherly recollection of the other Paul. It is with the two Florences that Dickens ends; mindful in valediction of his main design.

V

SIR WALTER RALEGH'S GOLD MINE: new light on the last Guiana Voyage.

by AGNES M. C. LATHAM

IN 1616 Sir Walter Ralegh was released from the Tower to lead an expedition to Guiana, from which he promised to bring back gold without giving just cause of offence to Spain. Since Spain claimed the whole of the New World, no one could suppose for one moment that Spain would not be offended. Everyone, moreover, could see how unlikely it was that Ralegh, who had not visited Guiana since he first took possession in the Queen's name in 1595, should have allowed a rich and easily accessible gold-mine to lie neglected all that time, only to recollect its existence when it offered a means of escape from long durance. This was as plain in 1617 as it is today. King James, permitting the expedition to sail, had presumably convinced himself that however it turned out, he did not stand to lose. If the gold was forthcoming, he would accept it, and with it Ralegh's argument that Guiana was English. If it failed, he could sacrifice Ralegh, a convicted traitor, without compunction, and have a crushing rejoinder to that party in the state which was urging him to take a more Elizabethan line in foreign policy.

The expedition failed lamentably and the sacrifice was duly made, upon a scaffold in Old Palace Yard, Westminster, on the 29th of October, 1618. But James had miscalculated in supposing that Ralegh would die disgraced and his cause die with him. In many peoples' eyes he looked uncommonly like a martyr. It was difficult to explain why a man, convicted in 1603 of conspiring with Spain, and never pardoned, was to be beheaded in 1618 for trying to advance his country's honour at the expense of her old enemy. The best brain in the country was enlisted to do the explaining, and Sir Francis Bacon produced a *Declaration of the Demeanour and Carriage of Sir Walter Ralegh, Knight, as well in his voyage, as in and sithence his return; and of the true motives and inducements which occasioned his majesty to proceed in doing justice upon him, as hath been done.* Ralegh's side of the question is to be found in the *Apologie for the ill successe of his enterprise to Guiana,* and in his private letters. Finally, the

Spanish stories are extant and may be consulted in Fray Pedro Simon's *Setima Noticia de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme,* 1626, and in a series of official depositions taken at St. Thome shortly after Ralegh left Guiana. Copies of the original documents, in the Spanish archives, were made at the time of the Guiana-Venezuela Boundary Dispute in the late nineteenth century and deposited in the British Museum. With the aid of this fresh material Professor Vincent T. Harlow, in *Ralegh's Last Voyage,* 1932, has been able to give a much fuller and more accurate account of what really happened in Guiana than any historian before him.

Professor Harlow's valuable book included as many of the documents in the case as were available, and in his opinion relevant.[1] It is my good fortune to be able to add to the collection. Thanks to the generosity of Mrs. W. Bryher, I have in my hands a manuscript, until recently in the possession of the Bacon-Frank family, which contains seventeenth-century transcripts of no less than five documents, relating to the last Guiana voyage, which have not to my knowledge been previously published. They are (i) a letter from a Captain Edward Giles, to Lady Ralegh, 24 May 1618, enclosing (ii) "The letter which the Captens of Sir Walter Raleghs Fleete writt against him to the Lord Admirall"; answered meticulously, point by point, in Ralegh's *Apologie*, (iii) a letter from Captain Keymis to Ralegh, 24 January 1617/18, enclosing (iv) a signed statement by six of Keymis's men, corroborating the evidence in the letter, and (v) Keymis to Ralegh, 9 February 1617/18. The text of the last three transcripts is reproduced at the end of this article. The manuscript, written throughout in the same English secretary-hand, contains in addition matter relating to the Earl of Essex, some documents relating to Ralegh in 1603 and 1618, already familiar, and some notes on law.

Keymis's letters are of very special interest in that it was he, and not Ralegh, who led the expedition into the Interior, and all that Ralegh knew of it he had to accept at secondhand, from his lieutenant. Weakened by fever, he had remained with the big ships at Trinidad. There are a number of elements in the whole puzzle upon which the new letters throw no light. There is nothing of French reinforcements, plans to raid Spanish commerce and plans to take refuge in France. There is

[1] When I annotate quotations first with a page reference to Harlow and afterwards with a contemporary source, I am quoting from the text of that source as it is printed in *Ralegh's Last Voyage.* When I quote directly from contemporary documents, I still give a page reference to Harlow, which then appears in brackets, at the end of the note.

nothing, either, to support the Spanish allegations of a prearranged plan to let the English into the town. The subject upon which the letters have something fresh and important to say is the central one, concerning the position of the mine and of the Spanish town of St. Thome, and the reasons why the one was never discovered and the other, in defiance of all promises to keep the peace, was destroyed.

When Ralegh annexed Guiana in 1595 he went up the Orinoco as far as the mouth of the Caroni River, and no farther. There he discovered gold; but because the river was rising dangerously, and because the gold occurred in hard quartz, from which he had no implements to extract it, he was forced to come away with only a few specimens to attest the value of the mine. Some twenty miles downstream he landed again and marched overland, in the conduct of a chief called Putijma, who promised to show him a gold mine near Mount Iconuri. Before they reached the mine Ralegh gave up exhausted, but he "sent Captaine *Keymis* with six shotte to goe on, and gaue him order not to returne to the port of *Putijma*, which is called *Chiparepare*, but to take leasure, and to march downe the said valley [of Amariocapana], as farre as a riuer called *Cumaca*, where I promised to meete him againe".[1] Leaving two pickets at the mouth of the Cumaca, Ralegh went downstream to explore another tributary, called Winicapora, returning to find that Keymis had not yet made the rendezvous. He therefore 'rowed vp a league or two farther into the riuer, shooting off peeces all the way, that he might know of our being there. And the next morning we hearde them answere vs also with a peece: we tooke them abord vs, and tooke our leaue of *Putijma* their guide, who of all others most lamented our departure".[2]

This is the occasion to which Keymis refers in his letter of January 24, when he speaks of a place called Winicapora, "Where your Lordship tooke me into your Barge when I was lost on the shoare, and had beene lost [i.e. had perished] if your self had not retourned from Winicapora . . . and sought me out among the woodes and drowned lands". Winicapora, he declares, is not two days' journey from the mine. This supports a location in Putijma's country, and, indeed, everything points to the mine of 1617 being the one that Putijma (that almost too obliging chieftain) showed to Keymis, in 1595. Had it been the Caroni mine, Ralegh could not have promised to avoid hostilities with Spain, for when Keymis returned to Guiana in 1596, and made straight for the Caroni,

[1] Ralegh's *Discoverie of Guiana*, ed. V. T. Harlow, p. 65.

[2] Ibid., p. 68.

he found that the Spaniards had taken over the native settlement there, at once barring his way to the mine and convincing him of its worth. For what could be their reason in settling upon that precise spot, if not to exploit the gold-bearing quartz in the near neighbourhood? The party then turned downstream, as they had done the year before, and Keymis went inland to look for Putijma, but Putijma was in hiding and did not emerge.[1]

Apart from the position of St. Thome, upon the site of the native settlement which Keymis sometimes calls Morequito's Port, after an old chief, and sometimes Topiawari's Port, after his successor, the Caroni mines were unsuitable for Ralegh's purpose, in that a quartz mine, as he explains at some length in *The Discoverie of Guiana,* is very difficult to work, and speed and secrecy are out of the question. The mine which he propounded first in 1607 required no skilled labour, "seeinge that the gold Oare is Founde but att the Roote of the grasse, in a Broade and Flatt slate".[2] Since this is one of the ways in which gold actually does occur in Guiana,[3] it must be accepted as possible that Ralegh knew of some such mine. That he had seen it himself is much less likely. Indeed, he betrayed himself when he objected to Keymis making a reconnaissance alone, because "two guydes are better then one", and "yf Kemishe dye, or perishe by shipwracke in the waye thetherwarde . . . I dare not trust myne owne Memorye, and myne owne marckes For the Findeinge it".[4] If he had seen the mine at all, he had seen it only as a hill on a far horizon. The implication that he had done more was simply to make his assurances more plausible and to strengthen his right to lead the expedition personally.

It may reasonably be objected that Ralegh based his hopes of the mine on flimsy foundations. He had no means of testing the yield. He could not be sure that Keymis would find the place again. He guaranteed that it was easily accessible from the river bank when the evidence all points the other way. But it is yet to be proved that he had no grounds for believing that the mine existed at all; and his plan to exploit it was, in its conception, masterly. The expedition was to sail "under colour of

[1] *The second voyage of Guiana performed and written in the yeere 1596 by Laurence Keymis,* Hakluyt's *Voyages,* Dent, 1926, vol. VII, pp. 373–375.

[2] Ralegh to Ld. Salisbury, 1611, a 17th century transcript in a MS book in the possession of the present writer. (Harlow, p. 110).

[3] C. Le Neve Foster, *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society,* Aug. 1869, an identification of Ralegh's El Dorado with the Caratal goldfield.

[4] Ralegh to Salisbury, 1611. (Harlow, p. 110.)

Virginia",[1] slip quietly up the Orinoco, and be shovelling alluvial gold into sacks before ever the Spaniards in St. Thome, twenty miles farther upstream, so much as heard of it. The Indians along the river bank were friendly to the English and would not readily betray them. When the settlers did hear rumours of what was going on and had taken steps to confirm them, they had a choice of two alternatives—to remain in the town, and strengthen their defences, in case the English had hostile intentions, or to march downstream and engage their pickets, which could fairly be claimed as an aggressive act. Of the two, they were much more likely to choose the former.

The essence of this plan was surprise, and that is why both Ralegh and Keymis are never tired of charging King James with breach of faith, because before they left England he insisted upon their handing over to the Spanish Ambassador the exact number of their ships and men, the date of sailing and the place to which they were bound. "There was never poore man soe exposed to the slaughter as I was," Ralegh indignantly declared.[2] It was a deeply felt grievance and a very real one. It has been objected that Ralegh could not ever have hoped to keep the expedition secret; but as an Elizabethan there was nothing he did not know about the art of bluff, and it was one thing to leave the Spaniards vaguely aware that something was to be attempted in the New World, another to give them exact details of numbers, time and place. It has been further objected that James's act was no betrayal, since Ralegh knew of it, and himself supplied the particulars to the Spanish ambassador. He could do nothing else if the King chose to insist. He was the subordinate member of a very unequal partnership, in which he had sunk his money, his reputation and his life. He did not dictate terms. He accepted them.

The story of what really came of the Ambassador's warning, as Professor Harlow traces it from Spanish sources, is ironic. St. Thome was not reinforced till six weeks after the English had left Guiana, and then only locally and not from Spain. Ralegh, however, did not know this, and his whole plan was bedevilled by fear of Spanish reinforcements.

[1] Ralegh to Lord Salisbury, 1607, Cecil Papers 124/121, at Hatfield House, (Harlow, p. 101). See also Ralegh to the Queen, 1611, MS Harley 39, f.359 (Harlow, p. 106); Captain Thornehurst's Relation, MS Additional 34, 216, in the British Museum, f.48 (Harlow, p. 145); Ralegh's *Discoverie of Guiana*, ed. cit., p. 13.

[2] Ralegh to his wife, 22 March, 1617/18, MS Harley 4761, f.23 (Harlow, p. 244).

The Indians did nothing to help, greeting the adventurers with an alarming crop of rumours.[1] Was it suicide to begin operations miles inland, at Mount Iconuri, with St. Thome strongly garrisoned and on the alert? There was a good deal of talk, remembered and reported against Ralegh afterwards, about "the town", and whether it should be taken before opening the mine.[2] In the end, on his own evidence, he "referred the takinge of the towne to the goodnes of the Myne",[3] assuming that if the mine proved "royal", the King would be willing to wrest it by force from the Spanish intruders. (In this assumption he was probably mistaken. The partners had no skill in reading one another's mind).

Keymis set off with orders, reproduced in the *Apologie*, "to suffer the Captains and Companies of the English to passe upp to the Westward of the mountain Aio, from whence you have lesse then three myles to the myne, and to lodge and encampe betwene the Spanish towne and you, if there be any towne neare it;[4] that beinge soe secured you might make triall what depth and breadth the myne holds, and whether or noe it answereth our hopes."[5] The protective screen, to the west of the mine, was in a commonsense precaution against a possible attacking force from St. Thome. Without reinforcements, St. Thome would not have ventured an attack. But Keymis, who was of "obstinate absolute resolution and . . . farr from careing to please or satisfie any man but himselfe,"[6] had other intentions. He went straight to the town and advanced upon it in battle array. The contention that the Spaniards fired the first shot, from an ambush, is purely academic and very likely true. The purpose of an ambush is to shoot first. Unhappily for Keymis, one of the fatal casualties was young Walter Ralegh, who with "vnaduised daringness"[7] pressed to the fore.

[1] Harlow, p. 325, Instructions to Keymis in Ralegh's *Apologie*; Lovelace to Carleton, 10 February, 1618, Cal. State Papers Dom. James, p. 521.

[2] Harlow, p. 234, Parker to Alley, 22 March 1618, MS Harley 39, f.351; Harlow, p. 344, Bacon's *Declaration*.

[3] Ralegh to Carew, 1618, MS Cotton Vitellius C, XVII, f.439v (Harlow, p. 252).

[4] This is only one of several signs that the script of these instructions has been edited, if not wholly rewritten, after the event. Ralegh knew of the existence of St. Thome and its exact position.

[5] Harlow, p. 324, Ralegh's *Apologie*.

[6] Ibid., Harlow, p. 329.

[7] Parker to Alley, MS Harley 39, f.351 (Harlow, p. 231).

On January 7th, 1618, Keymis took pen in hand to break to the boy's father the news of his bereavement. It was not an easy thing to do, even had he been quite free from blame, and he was not free from blame. Young Walter died because Keymis had disobeyed orders and attacked St. Thome. Keymis therefore invented a story that St. Thome had been moved twenty miles downstream, and that the English, landing to attempt the Iconuri mine, had come upon it unawares and been inevitably embroiled. This story Ralegh accepted and repeated in his own defence. When it was urged that he had concealed from the King the existence of a settlement near the mine, he replied that the settlement had been twenty miles farther upstream when last he heard of it. Historians accepted this statement the more readily because the pioneer town several times shifted its site in the course of its early history. They thought Fray Simon was in error when he told the story as though, in 1617, it was still near the mouth of the Caroni. It has fallen to Professor Harlow, working upon contemporary Spanish records, to settle the matter once and for all, in Fray Simon's favour. There can be no shadow of doubt, now, that St. Thome was not moved, and that somebody therefore was lying. Without fresh evidence it was natural to conclude that the lie was Ralegh's.[1] It certainly served his turn. It appeared "suddenly and for the first time,"[2] Professor Harlow says, in a letter of September 24th, 1618, to the King, in which Ralegh speaks of "a Spanish village . . . which was newe sett up within three myles of the Myene",[3] and again in the *Apologie*, "It seemeth that the Serieant Maior, Keymish, and the rest, were by accident forced to change their first resolution, and that finding a Spanish towne or rather a village, sett upp twentie myles distance from the place where Anthoneo Berreo the first Governor by me taken in my first discovery had attempted to plant, vizt, some two leagues to the Westward of the myne, they agreed to land and encamp between the mine and the towne wch they did not suspect to be soe neare them as it was. And meaneing to rest themselves on the River syde till the next day, they were in the night sett upon and charged by the Spaniards."[4]

It is now possible to point to a much earlier appearance, which is still

[1] Such was not, however, the conclusion of the late Mr. Edward Thompson who, in *Sir Walter Ralegh*, 1935, offered an interpretation of the available evidence which anticipates in a striking way the facts that have now come to light.

[2] Introduction, p. 63.

[3] Ralegh to the King, 24 September, 1618, State Papers Dom. James, XCIX/169, i (Harlow, p. 277).

[4] Harlow, p. 325, Ralegh's *Apologie*.

not the first, since Keymis refers allusively to the change of site, as to something already known. In the letter of January 24th, he speaks of 'Winicapora, which is distant about 30 miles from the old towne of St. Thome, where the Spaniards did inhabit the next yeare after your departure out of those parts"; and in the letter of February 9th, "Not to haue sought the mine before any other buisines was taken in hand was casuall by reason that we were off this new towne of St. Thome before (I not knowing of any other then the old towne of Moriquetos Port) we thought our selues to be neere it". Any plain statement about the new site naturally belongs to the letter of January 7th, in which Keymis broke the news of young Walter's death. The only known record of this letter is a quotation in the *Apologie*, which must be supposed to be no more than a portion of the original.[1] It does not include even a plain statement of how the young man met his end. If ever the complete text is found, it will begin with an account of the attack on the town, its unexpected proximity to the Iconuri mine, and the circumstances of young Walter's death.

Keymis, having secured the town, had an obvious duty to find a mine which would justify the assault; but he was in no mood to do so. St. Thome was proving a liability rather than an asset. The English garrison was unruly, and the dispossessed Spaniards were capable of counter-attacking at any moment of the day or night, and of effectively way-laying foraging parties. The position of the mine, which was easy to demonstrate on a map, was not so easy to locate in the dense, tropical woodland. How, when he found it, could Keymis ever get sufficient men there to work it, and when he got them there how was he to provision them? Moreover, since young Walter was dead, and his father, sick and old, was not likely long to survive him, what motive was there for continuing a search for the mine? Disheartened by accumulated dangers and disasters, Keymis resolved for a second time to disobey orders. He did not attempt the mine.[2]

[1] Harlow, pp. 326, 327, from Ralegh's *Apologie*. It is possible that instead of making a transcript Ralegh appended a page of the original letter. Why else does he say "as it appeareth by his Letter to me *of his owne handwritinge, heereafter inserted*"?

[2] Ralegh gives what is probably a reliable account of Keymis's excuses in the letters he wrote from St. Kitts, in March, to Secretary Winwood and to his wife. He was writing soon after the event, to persons in his confidence, and before he knew the nature of the charges that were to be brought against him. He had therefore no reason to falsify. How far Keymis gave a truthful picture of his own motives is another matter.

Instead, he took an exploring party up the Orinoco; "collecting information," says Professor Harlow, "for an invasion of New Granada".[1] To observe that the moment was inept, would be an understatement. One can only suppose that Keymis, whose practical soldiership had been tried and found wanting, felt some relief in putting St. Thome and his responsibilities there temporarily behind him, and concentrating upon something in which he had already proved himself; for he was a skilled explorer and cartographer. He might even stumble upon a new and splendid gold mine.

Before he had gone very far he must have thought that he *had* stumbled upon a gold mine. Some nine miles above the mouth of the Caroni River the main channel of the Orinoco is interrupted by the island of Seiba, towards which any boats, seeking the narrow passage between the island and the bank, must necessarily approach. Unknown to Keymis, this was where the women and children from St. Thome had gathered for safety. When the Captain in charge of the refugee-camp sighted the English boats, he did not stop to enquire whither they were bound. He opened fire with all the force he could muster, ten Spaniards and ten Indians.[2] It is plain from Keymis's account that he was taken completely by surprise, and considerably daunted. His troubles were pursuing him. To the English it would naturally appear that the Spaniards were guarding the way to a mine.[3] At no time had they the smallest inkling of how matters really stood. Ralegh repeats Keymis's story, raging impotently at the lack of resolution displayed in not forcing a passage, in spite of opposition—"For I told him, that seing my sonne was lost, I cared not if he had lost a hundred more in opening the Mine so my credite had bene saued."[4]

Keymis, however, had not the least intention of investigating strange territory in the teeth of Spanish opposition. He returned to St. Thome to refit, and giving Seiba as wide a berth as the channel permitted, he made a twelve day journey up river. According to Spanish reports he

[1] Introduction, p. 79.

[2] See especially Harlow, pp. 206, 207, the deposition of Captain Grados, who organized the attack; and Harlow, p. 178, Fray Simon's *Setima Noticias*, Chap. XXVI.

[3] Particularly as Keymis presents the facts to Ralegh, leaving him to suppose that the fire came from the main bank. He never mentions the island.

[4] Ralegh to Winwood, State Papers Dom. James, XCVI/70 (Harlow, p. 241).

went as far as the Guarico, a distance of three hundred miles.[1] That is to say, he went three hundred miles farther than either he or Ralegh had ever been before, and all the time, according to his own first-hand accounts, he was looking for "the mine". On January 24th, checked by the shoaling of the tropical waterways, he persuaded six of the gentlemen-adventurers to sign a declaration that he had done his honest best to find the mine, and "the hand of Nature opposing impossibilities," he had been forced to desist.

Whatever Keymis's motives may have been in undertaking the journey, he could never have persuaded the men to accompany him on any other pretext than a mine. To deceive them was understandable. To deceive Ralegh, on the other hand, was surely impossible. Ralegh may have believed that there was a new St. Thome, near Mount Iconuri, and that the Seiba ambush checked a genuine attempt to land and go to the mine, but an expedition which, on Keymis's own showing, took the adventurers "forty leagues" beyond the new St. Thome, was fantastic. It is still a good hundred miles farther than anybody had been before. One might suppose that Keymis had completely lost his bearings were not the error too gross. Was he, when he wrote the letters of January 24th and February 9th, still doubtful whether he would find Ralegh alive, and uncertain into whose hands his letters might eventually fall? These letters, with the declaration signed by the gentleman adventurers, have every appearance of public documents, something to be shown. They are in the nature of a formal apology, and though Ralegh might know that the second journey was not to the mine, it was unnecessary for anyone else to know it.

Keymis came back to St. Thome to find the town in ruins and the ships already homeward bound. Harassed by the Spaniards, doubtful of the very existence of the mine, fearful of reinforcements, the garrison had deteriorated morally to the point of wantonly burning in his bed a crippled priest who had formerly been an object of their compassion.[2] It was useless, as things were, to attempt the still unexploited Iconuri mine. Keymis seems to have gestured feebly towards it,[3] thereby

[1] Harlow, p. 207, deposition of Captain Grados. Keymis says he went forty leagues (120 miles) beyond the town. Chaplain Jones (Harlow, p. 235) says three score leagues (180 miles). The Spanish estimate, based upon Indian stories, seems excessive.

[2] Harlow, p. 184, Fray Simon, Chapter XXVIII, supported by the Spanish depositions.

[3] Harlow, pp. 241, 242, Ralegh to Winwood, 21 March; Harlow, p. 329, Ralegh's *Apologie*.

convincing his disillusioned followers that the mine was indeed imaginary, for it took no intelligence to recognize that it could not be at once three hundred miles above St. Thome and twenty miles below it. *The Declaration* deals mercilessly with the discrepancy. The mine, it sneers, was moveable.[1] At Trinidad Keymis had to answer such questions as Ralegh, in public and in private, elected to ask him. We can guess what they were, and that the answers could hardly be satisfactory. The wretched Keymis presently put himself beyond the reach of questions by thrusting a long knife between his ribs as far as the handle.

It is noticeable that Ralegh never mentions the second and less explicable of the journeys upstream. He dwells upon the ambush in the Seiba channel, with its appearance of being an attempt on the mine.[2] Others were less reticent. Chaplain Jones of the *Chudleigh* sourly observes that "whereas the mine was described to be three miles shorte of the towne, they went not only three miles, but three score leagues beyond it, till at last they were forced to return; and had they found a mine they must have come backe for spades, pickaxes and refiners, for none of these carryed any with them."[3] The uncharitable Captain Charles Parker wrote to a friend, "When wee were possessed of the Towne Captaine Kemish tooke diveres gentlemen with him to fynde the myne, and trifeled vpe and downe some 20 dayes keepinge vs in hope still of findinge it, but at laste we found his delayes meere Illusiones and him selfe a mear machevill, for he was false to all men and moste odious to him selfe, for moste vngodly he butchered himselfe lothinge to live since he could doe no mor villany".[4]

The two things which ruined Ralegh were the attack on St. Thome and the failure to find the mine. The other charges were damaging, but they could not be proved. He demonstrably did not attack the Plate Fleet, and he had used no French ships. Neither of the first mentioned offences was his personal responsibility. There is little doubt that had an attack on St. Thome appeared to him in any circumstances strategically desirable, he would have authorized it. The reason why he produces so

[1] Harlow, p. 344, Bacon's *Declaration*.

[2] There is no sign in Keymis's letter that he intended a landing. The Spanish refugees thought he meant to land on their island. Ralegh thought he meant to land on the bank. His second, uninterrupted, journey shows what he really meant to do, and that he was not seeking any of the Caroni mines.

[3] Samuel Jones to the Privy Council, *Notes and Queries*, Second Series, XI, p. 4, from a contemporary MS (Harlow, p. 235).

[4] Parker to Alley, MS Harley 39, f.351 (Harlow, p. 231).

belatedly the excuse of a "new St. Thome" is because he did not at first realize that there was anything to excuse. He never blamed Keymis for taking the town (which is evidence that he believed to the end the story that it lay directly in the way to the mine.) What he did blame him for bitterly, and what he would never for a moment have countenanced, had he had any control over proceedings, was the failure to attempt the mine.

I have assumed that the locality of the mine was near Mount Iconuri because that is the first landmark which Ralegh mentions. In 1595 he says, "We sought the ford to passe ouer towards the mountain called *Iconuri*, where *Putijma* foretold vs of the mine".[1] Fairly regularly, in his proposals of 1607 and 1611, he mentions a mountain in connexion with the mine, which is "nire a nauigable riuer",[2] "not above five miles from the Navigable River taking the neerest way."[3] After 1595 Iconuri is not named. In his instructions to Keymis Ralegh says that the mine is not three miles from Mount Aio,[4] and Aio is a prominent landmark upon a guide-map in the possession of a French captain who had contracted to join the expedition at sea—a contract he did not keep.[5] It was in the neighbourhood of Mount Aio that Putijma had gone into hiding when Keymis sought him unavailingly in 1596, twenty miles downstream from the newly erected St. Thome. The journey took him six hours, sailing with the stream.[6] Ralegh, going upstream in 1595, had anchored for the night "betweene two mountaines, the one called *Aroami*, and the other *Aio*". Three days later he reached Topiawari's Port, the site of St. Thome.[7] It is, for obvious reasons, particularly difficult to assess mileage when it is quoted in terms of a day's journey. The one thing that is certain is that a considerable distance, at a conservative estimate twenty miles, divided St. Thome and the Caroni quartz-mines from the only other district in which any mineral-prospecting was done, the chief Putijma's country of Warapana.

Ralegh's interest in Guiana did not begin and end with gold mines.

[1] Ralegh's *Discoverie of Guiana*, ed. cit. p. 64.

[2] Ralegh to Haddington, MS Additional 6177 (British Museum), f.119 (Harlow, p. 103.)

[3] Ralegh to the Privy Council, MS Harley 39, f.350 (Harlow, p. 112).

[4] Harlow, p. 324, Ralegh's *Apologie*.

[5] S. R. Gardiner, *Fortnightly Review*, vol. VII, May 1867.

[6] Hakluyt's *Voyages*, ed. cit., vol. VII, p. 375.

[7] Ralegh's *Discoverie of Guiana*, ed. cit., p. 50.

The mine was a bait; a rather crude, excessively dangerous, but very effective bait. A gold-rush is not amenable to control, nor adaptable as an instrument of policy, facts upon which the peaceable James would have done well to reflect. When Ralegh came home and realized, with a genuine shock of surprise, that he was to be called to account, it became urgently necessary for him to establish his good faith in the matter; for if there was no mine, if there never had been any mine, then there could be no explanation of the attack upon St. Thome other than that it was a deliberate, though a singularly paltry, pointless and feeble attempt to disturb the peace of Europe. All that Keymis has to say of his toil and stress and disappointment and good will, of the natural resources of Guiana and the weakness of Spain in the New World, dear as these themes were to Ralegh's heart, was addressed to deaf ears before the one incomprehensible and shocking omission. Keymis had never been near the mine. But it is doubtful if even Ralegh knew how completely his devoted, obstinate, idealistic follower, Laurence Keymis, scholar of Balliol, had failed him.

THE NEW DOCUMENTS

I. *Mr. Kemish his letter to Sir Walter Ralegh.*

Sir

I am very sorry that my letters from St. Thome to Trinidado bearing date 7 January[1] 1617 *came not to your Lordshipps hands: how euer I wish (were god so pleased) you might neuer heare nor reade the contents thereof.*[2] Nihil fit sine numine. *Hauing dispatched your seruant Peter Andrewes with those letters on Satturday the* 10 *Jan: I tooke Sir John Fernes his shallop, and Sir Warham Sentleger his Barge, intending by the riuer of* Arapan *alias* Aaranza,[3] *which from the towne of St. Thome leadeth* [*to*[4]] *Topiawaries port,*[5] *to seeke passage to the mine. But on Sonday some* 8 *Spanish Shott*[6] *and* 450 *Indians*[7] *did* [*shoot upon us*[8]] *from the shore as we*

[1] Ralegh, in the *Apologie*, gives the date as January 8.

[2] The news of young Walter's death. Ralegh received the letters on January 13.

[3] Local names for the main channel of the Orinoco.

[4] to: MS omits.

[5] Topiawaries port: MS reads Topiahoannies pt.

[6] Ten in the Spanish accounts.

[7] Ten in the Spanish accounts. Keymis could not have miscalculated to this extent. The error must be imputed to the scribe, who at this point is copying carelessly.

[8] shoot upon us: supplied conjecturally: Something seems to have been omitted here.

passed by them vnseene, kild two of our men with the Bullet, and wounded 6 or 7 more with Indian arrowes.[1] *Captain* Thornhurst[2] *was shot in the head with an arrow: he is (god be thanked) recouered and cured of the hurt, but euer since he hath beene crasie and distempered in his bodie.*

On monday the 12 Jan. the barge with the hurt men was appointed to returne to the Towne, and I resolued to goe on in the Shallop alone being manned with 14 men: but the gentlemen which were with me ouer ruled me, and so with them I retourned to St. Thome. Tewesday 13 Jan. I sett saile with the shallop and two barges, And because I found a place within 2 miles of St. Thome, which bare the name of Winicapora, *I concluded with my self that I could not be two daies journey from the Mine: But this* Winicapora *is not that place, nor neere it by 40 leagues. Where your Lordship tooke me into your Barge when I was lost on the shoare, and had beene lost if your self had not retourned from* Winicapora,[3] *which is distant about 30 miles from the old towne of St. Thome. Where the Spaniards did inhabit the next yeare after your departure out of those parts, and sought*[4] *me out among the woodes and drowned lands. Your Lordshipp may conceiue by the following lines the success of this journey. Only thus much of truth I add therevnto that if the rocks seeming impassable: if the discomforte that the men in my shallop might take, in that both the barges* (p. 128) *for 6 daies together stoode vpon termes to departe from vs, and at the last did vtterly forsake vs, all the perswasions and menaces that the gentlemen in them did vse to the contrary notwithstanding, might haue diuerted me from goeing to the Mine: ther wanteth no colour for me now the second time to haue retourned to St. Thome. But I did (as they all acknowledged) rather choose to goe on with the shallop alone, and 14 men in her, and neuer yeilded to any perswasion or difficultie whatsoeuer vntile the hand of Nature opposing impossibilities crossed vs, and tooke from vs all hope and meanes of further procedings.*

II. *Enclosure with the previous letter.*

Know all men by theis presents that we whose names are here vnderwritten were in company with Laurence Kemish gentleman vpon a designe, which he had proposed vnto vs to bring vs to a certaine plac ine Guiana where he had in former times taken Ore of Gold out of the ground.[5] *To performe which seruice three boates were fitted and manned. vizt. A shallop which*

[1] The Spaniards recovered 8 oars.

[2] The MS reads Shornhurst. Captain Thomas Thornehurst of Kent was put in charge of fifty soldiers when the party left Trinidad. He was still sick when Ralegh wrote home on March 21st.

[3] A tributary of the Orinoco, marked on Ralegh's map, in agreement with this account.

[4] The subject is not *Spaniards*, but *your self*. See the *Apologie*.

[5] Both Ralegh and Keymis consistently claim that it was not a hearsay mine. Ralegh had given Lord Knevet a specimen of "slate Gold Ore." (Harlow, p. 112). Since Putijma, in 1595, was taking Keymis to see a gold mine, it is odd if, at the end, he never saw it.

belonged to the good ship called the Flying Hart, vnder the commaund of Sir John Ferne knight with 15 *men in her. A Barge of* 14 *oares which belonged vnto the good ship called the Thunder vnder the commaund of Sir Warham Sentleger knight with* 27 *men in her. And a barge of ten oares, which belonged to the good shipp called the Encounter vnder the commaund of Thomas Whitney esquire with* 18 *men in her. We set saile from the Towne of St. Thome in Guiana on Tewesday* 13 *Jan.* 1617, *and hauing laboured with sailes and oares vntill the* 24 *of the same month, and hauing passed many great sands and rocks with great difficultie in a large riuer of very greate swiftnes, we found our selues on the said* 24 *day imbayed amongst the sands. Where hauing searched all passages, experience taught vs that, where at other times any shipps of what burthen soeuer haue depth enough, our boates which did not draw* 3 *foote water, where the Riuer hath at least* 3 *miles bredth, where the waters haue their full course, were grounded and could not pass further.* (P. 129). *Now because in all cases, wher the success doth not answer the expectacion, the vndertakers of any buisines of consequence are subiect to diuerse constructions and malevolent imputacions. We of our free desire to testifie a simple truth, doe declare and attest in behalf of the said Laurence Kemish that his endeauour and willingnes by all meanes to performe this designe, and his perseueraunce in prosecuting it to the vttermost of all possibilitie are and ought to be free and discharged from all excepcion.*

In witnes whereof Aswell on our owne behalfes as also on the behalf of them all that vnder our Commaund and directions were associate and assistant in this Action, we haue to theis presents set to our hands. dated. 24. *January.* 1617.[1]

John Hamond
Robert Smith } *of the Shallop.*

William Winter
John Hall } *of the Thunder=barg.*

Edward Hamond
C. Osborne } *of the Incounter=barg.*

III. *Keymis to Ralegh, in continuation.*

Hauing spent 20 *daies before we could recouer St. Thome we found it burnt to the ground, and ouertooke our shipps that then began to take their course for Trinidado. It is true that for mine owne part I ame resolued that the mayne Riuer of Oronoq bearing* 7 *leagues of bredth vpon a flatt of Sands, before we come to the hill called Aio, admits no passage now, or this month following*

[1] This declaration appears to have been drawn up and signed on the very day when the expedition gave up, some two or three hundred miles from St. Thome, and turned downstream again. Since Keymis had no means of sending it ahead of his own progress, Ralegh may have received all three documents together.

vntill March be past. For the largenes depth swiftnes of this maine branch of Oronoq called Ararpen considered, it may welbe taken for a thinge incredible, that so strange and deepe waters should be so choked vp with a leuell of Sands, And that a Boate, that drawes not 30 *Inches, cannot pass. But this notwithstanding in resoluing to leaue no meanes vnsought, I haue made an offer to the Serjeant Major and the rest of the gentlemen once more to make triall of another branch of the maine Riuer*[1] *which I passed with my shipp, when you sent me to discouer theis parts, and whiles the shipps beat it up to recouer/* (*p.* 170) *Trinidado, to take the next way from the Mine by* Capuroq *or* Macureo *to meete them there. But besides doubts made by some that your shipps might be gone from Trinidado, the rather because two monthes are spent since your Lordship hath heard from vs, and that it is vncertaine, both in what time I can dispatch this busines, and how soone or how late our ships here may be able to arriue at Trinidado before or after vs. Others oppose this offer, objecting danger that may happen from the Spaniard by way laying vs, many of them hauing taken that way towards* Nueuo Reino[2] *to seeke to their old gouernour* Berreo.[3] *Others make question what men will partake with me, and willingly accompany me in this journey. Others doubt of meanes to victuall so many men as would be necessarie to goe with me for so long time. And all are out of doubt that the countrey being now left to the Spaniard, the Mine were it neuer so rich can yield no benefit to our voiage. And if it be your Lordships pleasure to send from Trinidado, it may with better assurance and certainty to them whom you shall imploy, be performed from thence.*[4] *In this case I was desirous in sted of writing personally to haue attended your Lordships commaund and direction: but my motion so to doe is vtterly disliked, and nothing is left in my power but to hasten our ships what I may to finde out your Lordship. Where it is objected that it is my falt not to haue chosen a fitter season of the yeare when the Riuers were open and passable. What man can be as god to foresee and foreknow such accidents as happen beyond his experience? And who could imagine that where for three parts of the yeare ther is an Ocean of waters, ther for one quarter of the yeare vizt. Jan. Feb. March debth of* 2 *or* 3 *foote should not be found. Not to haue sought the mine before any other buisines was taken in hand was casuall by reason that we were of*[*f*] *this new towne of St. Thome before I*[5] *(not knowing of any other then the old towne of Moriquetos part)*[6]

[1] Harlow, p. 329, Ralegh's *Apologie*. "Lett Captaine Charles Parker, Captaigne George Raleighe [the Sergeant Major] and Captaine Kinge, all liveing and in England, be putt to their oathes, whether or noe Kemish did not confesse to them Comeing downe the River, at a place where they cast anchor, that he could from that place have gone to the myne within two howres". How did Ralegh square this with the journeys *upriver*?

[2] New Granada, modern Colombia.

[3] See Ralegh's *Discoverie of Guiana*.

[4] Ralegh was anxious to perform it, but it was "vtterly disliked".

[5] The bracket should precede "I". The slip is probably in the original.

[6] Another name for Topiawari's Port, site of St. Thome.

we thought our selues to be neere it, and being there the gouernour with his forces soldiers and ordnance assalted vs both by land and water before we any waies offended them, which was the cause/(p. 171) that your direction, first to search the mine, could not accordingly be obserued.

1. *It is not to be doubted but that by this blow giuen to the Spaniard he is much weakned both in estimacion amongst the Indians, and in their estates both generall and priuate, present and future.*

2. *We found 3 or 4 refiners houses in this towne, fayrer and better furnished then the rest.*

3. *It is manifest and confessed by them, that they had intelligence out of Spaine, both of your Forces and intendment to finde out a gold Mine. And it now appeareth that the state of Spaine hath rather chosen to take part with vs in the knowledg of this Mine, then by reinforcing theis parts (which they might easily haue done) to saue and serue their gouernor here and his people, their wealth and their cittie, and the kings annuall revenewes.*

4. *It is certaine that with all diligence they wayte on our boates whersoeuer they goe, to obserue what we doe, and our sudden retourne, where the want of water stayed vs in our waye towards the Mine, caused them to leaue their* Pirago *vnto vs*[1] *that was at our heeles when we were 40 leagues vp the riuer from St. Thome.*

5. *In the judgement of reasonable men it can be no meruile that we finding our selues by the practise of the Spanish Embassador to be exposed to such perill, and entertainment here as the Councell of Spaine should thinke fittest to afforde vs and seeing so small account to be made of our safeties at home or hope to be conceiued that we could or should prosper in this enterprize, as that you were required vpon your allegiance to make knowne vnder your hand writing your strength and purposes, euen then when we were ready to set saile, and could haue no scope of further or other deliberacion, where before we left England, or attempted the execucion of this designe, dejected and maymed with diffidence and irresolucion, do we now hauing spent all our Match no longer stay vpon it, since by no meanes we can either presently pass to the place wher the mine is, or any longer keepe the place, which we haue gotten, without a settled plantacion, absolutely to displace and driue out the Spaniard. (p. 172). Now the premisses considered it rests in your Lordships wisdome to determine whether it be better to awaite the rising of the waters which will not be till March be past, and only there to discouer the place, and take from thence a proofe that there is a mine, and that done to quitt it for euer to the Spaniard, without any possibility of any further profitt to ensue. Or rather the weaknes of the Spaniard, the plenty of Corne, fruict, fish, fowle, flesh, all sortes of victualls, quid non? the pleasantnes, fruitfulnes healthfulnes and riches of this Country considered to reserue and commend this Action to some other vndertakers to follow it. The disgrace of not bringing our men to this Mine will, I know, whilst I liue rest heauy vpon me in the judgment and opinions of most men, and it wilbe argued and enforced that I haue wittingly deluded many noble and worthy gentlemen with vaine hopes. Which imputacions (how soeuer*

[1] The Spanish accounts say nothing of this.

mine owne conscience sincerely pleads not guilty *and fully satisfies me that I haue done the vtmost endeauour that in this case any honest man can doe, and that I haue no cause to hold my minde troubled as it is in this remediless vnhapines) is like to a deepe wound that cannot be healed without a seame. And therfore (presuming by your Lordshipps fauor freely to open my harte vnto you) I doe promise for a truth, that it would less afflict me to be condemned of strange folly by presuming to come hether to no other end in effect then to gratifie and enrich the Spaniard by discouering this Mine for them, then being so neere vnto it, being old and weake as I am, and vnlikely euer againe to be interessed in this buisines to goe off, and for euer to renege it without so much as one pound of the Ore to witnes my plaine and simple dealing. And to avoide theis reproofes reproaches, and aspersions that will ouerliue me in the judgments and mouthes of such men as doe not rightly and truly vnderstand, and will not willingly beleiue any thinge that in this case is contrary to their expectacions. Somewhat more I would gladly write vnto your Lordshipp if I did not doubt to be ouermuch tedious. But I hope (by the fauour of god) shortly to be/* (p. 177) *so happy as to see your Lordshipp. In the meane-time commending in my prayers your health and prosperitie to gods mercifull protection I rest euer to be commaunded humbly*

Yours

Lau. Kemise.

From aborde the Incounter *at the entrace of the Riuer* Macuero. 9 *feb.* 1617.

VI

DR. JOHNSON AND THE KANGAROO

by W. RUSSELL BRAIN

WALTER RALEIGH once remarked that Dr. Johnson's boots were "a topic which demands, and would well repay, the expert labours of academic research. Very little", he added, "is known about Johnson's boots." He himself began the investigation by producing evidence that Johnson wore his boots indifferently, either on either foot, and believed that other boot-wearers did the same. In spite of Boswell and all his other reporters we still know too little about Johnson, and especially about those habits and spontaneous actions which are often more revealing than hours of conversation. So we like to learn that he picked up a man and his chair at a theatre and threw them into the pit, that he rode to hounds, that he bathed in the sea at Brighton in October at the age of sixty-six—and that once he imitated a kangaroo.

During the next few years we may hope to discover a good many facts which Boswell omitted from the *Life*, and we shall have plenty of opportunities of speculating upon his reasons for doing so. The episode of the kangaroo, however, was one of Boswell's omissions which came to light almost a century ago. In the *Tour to the Hebrides* under date Sunday, 29 August 1773 he describes an evening spent at Inverness. During the day Johnson and Boswell had inspected Macbeth's castle and dined at Mr. Keith's where Mrs. Keith bothered Johnson with questions about his drinking only water, which he repressed by saying to Boswell: "You may remember that Lady Errol took no notice of this." Boswell concludes that account of the day thus:

> Having conducted Dr. Johnson to our inn, I begged permission to leave him for a little, that I might run about and pay some short visits to several good people of Inverness. He said to me, "You have all the old-fashioned principles, good and bad."—I acknowledge I have. That of attention to relations in the remotest degree, or to worthy persons in every state whom I have once known, I inherit from my father. It gave me much satisfaction to hear every body at Inverness speak of him with uncommon regard.—Mr. Keith and Mr. Grant, whom he had seen at Mr. M'Aulay's, supped with us at the

inn. We have roasted kid, which Dr. Johnson had never tasted before. He relished it much.

In 1852 a new edition of the *Tour* was published by the National Illustrated Library. The editor, Robert Carruthers, adds the following footnote:

> Mr. Grant used to relate that on this occasion Johnson was in high spirits. In the course of conversation he mentioned that Mr. Banks (afterwards Sir Joseph) had, in his travels in New South Wales, discovered an extraordinary animal called the kangaroo. The appearance, conformation, and habits of this quadruped were of the most singular kind; and in order to render his description more vivid and graphic, Johnson rose from his chair and volunteered an imitation of the animal. The company stared; and Mr. Grant said nothing could be more ludicrous than the appearance of a tall, heavy, grave-looking man, like Dr. Johnson, standing up to mimic the shape and motions of a kangaroo. He stood erect, put out his hands like feelers, and, gathering up the tails of his huge brown coat so as to resemble the pouch of the animal, made two or three vigorous bounds across the the room!

Mr. Grant lived to the great age of eighty-five and died at Calder manse on 28 June 1828. He had been minister at Calder or Cawdor, for forty-eight years and was highly esteemed as a divine, and as a fine specimen of an intelligent gentleman of the old school. The editors of the Isham edition of the *Tour* include his story in a footnote, but remark:

> One hopes that the Rev. Mr. Grant was not merely exercising his fancy when he told this story, but it seems strange that Boswell did not mention the incident.

It seems a strange, indeed an improbable, episode for a Presbyterian minister to invent, and since Mr. Grant died only twenty-four years before the publication of the edition which included his supplement to Boswell, it was easily possible for the editor of that edition to have had it from his own lips. On behalf of the late Mr. Grant I want to accept the implied challenge of Professor Pottle and Mr. Charles Bennett, not merely to defend his veracity or even his unimaginativeness, but because if Mr. Grant was speaking the truth there is a real problem as to why Boswell neglected to include such an entertaining incident in his narrative. And I shall present independent evidence in Mr. Grant's favour, for Boswell provides one clue and Mr. Grant another, which together make it possible to reconstruct the conversation on that Sunday evening in Inverness and to explain why Johnson talked of kangaroos.

Boswell tells us that Johnson ate kid for the first time, and Mr. Grant records that he talked of Mr. Banks. Eighteen months previously, as Boswell relates in the *Life*, Johnson had met Banks and had heard from him about a goat which had twice accompanied him on his voyages to the Antipodes. This animal, after its adventurous life, had been turned out to grass, and Johnson had composed two lines of Latin verse which Mrs. Thrale tells us were to be engraved on its collar. These verses are contained in Johnson's letter to Banks dated 27 February 1771 (I quote from Boswell's *Life*):

TO JOSEPH BANKS, ESQ.

'Perpetu[i] ambitâ bis terrâ præmia lactis
Hæc habet altrici Capra secunda Jovis!

SIR,

'I return thanks to you and to Dr. Solander for the pleasure which I received in yesterday's conversation. I could not recollect a motto for your Goat, but have given her one. You, Sir, may perhaps have an epick poem from some happier pen than, Sir,

'Your most humble servant,

'SAM JOHNSON.'

Boswell provides the following translation of the lines:

In fame scarce second to the nurse of Jove,
This Goat, who twice the world had traversed round,
Deserving both her master's care and love,
Ease and perpetual pasture now has found.

Roasted kid, therefore, reminded Johnson of this famous goat, and the goat recalled young Mr. Banks. There is a small piece of independent evidence that Banks was in Johnson's mind during the Scottish tour, for on 21 August 1773 he had written from Banff to Mrs. Thrale giving her an account of his journey and describing his visit to

> Lord Monboddo . . . the Scotch judge, who has lately written a strange book about the origin of language, in which he traces monkeys up to man, and says that in some countries the human species have tails like other beasts. He enquired for these long-tailed men of Banks, and was not well pleased that they had not been found in all his peregrination.

Banks had sailed with Captain Cook in the *Endeavour* leaving England in August 1768 and returning in July 1771, only seven months before

the date of Johnson's letter to him, and on this voyage they had been the first white men to see the kangaroo. Banks himself describes it in his journal under the date 7 July 1770:

> We walked many miles over the flats and saw four of the animals, two of which my greyhound fairly chased; but they beat him owing to the length and thickness of the grass, which prevented him from running, while they at every bound leaped over the tops of it. We observed, much to our surprise, that instead of going upon all fours, this animal went upon two legs, making vast bounds, just as the jerboa (*Mus jaculus*) does.

And a week later he writes:

> Our second lieutenant had the good fortune to kill the animal that had so long been the subject of our speculations. To compare it to any European animal would be impossible, as it has not the least resemblance to any one I have seen. Its fore-legs are extremely short, and of no use to it in walking; its hind again as disproportionally long; with these it hops seven or eight feet at a time, in the same manner as the jerboa, to which animal indeed it bears much resemblance, except in size, this being in weight 38 lbs., the jerboa no larger than a common rat.

Later he observed that this strange creature was called by the natives a kangaroo. With nothing but Banks's account to go upon, Johnson surely achieved a remarkable verisimilitude when he "stood erect, put out his hands like feelers, and, gathering up the tails of his huge brown coat so as to resemble the pouch of the animal, made two or three vigorous bounds across the room!"

Thus, from the roasted kid to the goat, from the goat to Mr. Banks, from Mr. Banks to the kangaroo, the chain of association is complete, and I hope I have vindicated Mr. Grant from the serious charge of "exercising his fancy".

There is also a suggestion that Johnson may have heard about the kangaroo from another source, for Boswell says that on 7 May 1773 Johnson and he, at breakfast at Mr. Thrale's in the Borough, discussed Hawkesworth's *Voyages*. "Hawkesworth", said Johnson, "can tell only what the voyagers have told him; and they have found very little, only one new animal, I think." Hawkesworth's book contained a picture of a kangaroo, and the skull of one of the kangaroos killed by Captain Cook's party was given by Banks to John Hunter and preserved in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons till it was destroyed by bombing in the

recent war.[1] Such, nearly two centuries later, was the end of Dr. Johnson's kangaroo.

We do not know a great deal about the relations between Johnson and Banks and I have not been able to find any account of the meeting at which Johnson may have heard about the kangaroo. Banks was only twenty-nine at the time. Educated at Harrow, Eton and Christ Church, he had visited Newfoundland before he was twenty-one, and on his return from the South Seas was considerably lionized. He was elected F.R.S. at the age of twenty-three and P.R.S. at thirty-five, holding office as President for thirty-two years. Andrew Duncan illustrates his enthusiasm with an episode from his early life:

> Such was his singular zeal, that on one occasion when botanizing in a ditch, he was seized by police-officers, and carried before a Magistrate, as a suspicious person. But upon searching his pockets, in place of stolen watches, or other unlawful plunder, nothing was found but wild flowers. On his name, rank and pursuits, being ascertained, he was dismissed by the worthy Magistrate, not only with many apologies, but with testimonies of high approbation.

The magistrate was Fielding.

Though Johnson never saw a kangaroo he did see Omai the Otaheitan savage, whom Banks brought home with him and who, according to Sir John Cullum, was tattooed on the backs of his hands and fingers and elsewhere only on "his posteriors". Omai was a gentle savage, of whom the Bishop of Lincoln said that "the two leading principles of his mind were a regard for Religion and a desire for Revenge." Dr. Johnson, who had argued against Lord Monboddo's defence of the savage, would not admit that Omai's good manners could be the outcome of his own culture: they must be due to the genteel company he had kept in England. "As a proof" of which (he somewhat illogically remarked) when Omai and Lord Mulgrave sat side by side with their backs to the light, he "was afraid to speak to either, lest [he] should mistake one for the other".

Banks was a member of the Club, a pallbearer at Johnson's funeral, and served on the Committee which erected his monument.

Is it after all so difficult to understand why Boswell omitted the episode of the kangaroo? His aim was to paint a consistent portrait of Johnson. As he put it in his dedication of the *Life*, "though I tell nothing

[1] T. C. S. Morrison Scott and F. C. Sawyer, '*The Identity of Captain Cook's Kangaroo*', *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History) Zoology*, vol. I, No. 3, 1950.

but the truth, I have still kept in my mind that the whole truth is not always to be exposed." Boswell portrayed a Johnson who was always looking down on him from a height, perhaps because, as Dr. Douglas Hubble has suggested, he was a father-substitute. There was no room in Boswell's portrait for those lighthearted features which a young woman like Fanny Burney could discover and delineate in him. Of course Boswell had no objection to reporting an occasional frisk, provided it was a dignified, or at least a condescending, frisk. Probably he would have recorded it if Johnson had imitated a kangaroo in order to give a lesson in natural history to a child, as he relates that he once pretended to a little girl that he was a giant, telling her in a hollow voice he would take her with him to his cave in the rocks. But it was surely a different matter to imitate a kangaroo in the presence of a Presbyterian minister, and, worst of all, on a Sunday. Only the week previously Boswell had noted in his *Tour* Johnson's views on Sunday observance: "It should be different from another day", Johnson had said. "People may walk, but not throw stones at birds. There may be relaxation, but there should be no levity". The lightest moments of Boswell's Johnson possess a gravity which is quite inconsistent with leaping about like a kangaroo in Scotland on the Sabbath. That, surely, was more than relaxation.

VII

MODES OF MEANING

by J. R. FIRTH

THE study of meaning is a permanent interest of scholarship. It has been pursued in all the languages of the major civilizations and in ancient times especially in Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, including the Latin of the Medieval Scholastics—Duns Scotus, Thomas of Erfurt. In English the obvious phrase "the meaning of meaning" is well-known as the title of a work on the definition of knowledge, a matter which is not under examination in the present essay. There are many other ways of applying the word "meaning" in English, including the usages of logicians, psychologists, sociologists, mathematicians and lexicographers. The use of the word "meaning" is subject to the general rule that each word when used in a new context is a new word.[1] The disciplines and techniques are those of general linguistics which are designed for empirical analysis and do not necessarily have a point of departure in other disciplines such as biology, psychology, literary criticism or in a school of metaphysics. The constructs or schemata of linguistics enable us to handle isolates that may be called language events. These systematic constructs are neither immanent nor transcendent, but just language turned back on itself. The present essay is an attempt to sketch the framework of a language of description in English about English for those who use English, to illustrate what I understand by linguistic analysis, and especially to show the dangers of an over-facile superficial use of the word *stylistics*, without an adequate logical syntax or even without considering the essential pre-requisites of linguistics. The disciplines and techniques of linguistics are directed to assist us in making statements of meaning. Indeed the main concern of descriptive linguistics is to make statements of meaning.[2]

Every scientific worker must mark out his field in accordance with the resources of his disciplines and techniques and develop them in the

[1] For further contexts see my "Personality and Language in Society" in *The Sociological Review*, vol. XLII, Section II, Year 1950, pp. 6, 8–14; and my "Technique of Semantics", *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1935.

[2] See "Personality and Language in Society" (as in previous note).

handling of his chosen material. The linguist studies the speaking person in the social process. It has been said that two persons taking part in the continuity of repetitions in the social process offer material for most branches of linguistics in making statements of meaning. The linguist deals with persons habitually maintaining specific forms of speech or writing which can be referred to dialects or languages operating in close or open social groups.[1]

The study of linguistic institutions is thus more specific and positive and on the whole less speculative than the sociological study of societies. Sociologists and social anthropologists are much bolder than linguists in what they find it possible to state in general human terms. To what lengths sociological abstraction can be extended is well exemplified in Pareto's theory of residues and derivations.[2]

There are, however, indications that students of human biology, neurology, acoustics and electrical communications are beginning to converge on certain aspects of man as a speaking animal. It is extremely difficult at present to get any detailed picture of the general physiology of utterance which must comprise the whole of the respiratory tract and all the relevant muscalature and innervation and, moreover, the processes of the nervous system and especially of the brain. Acousticians are limited to a small fraction of the bodily energy (probably less than twenty per cent) given to speaking. Any sort of measurement or assessment of speech energy by acoustics principally affects the hearing, and, as the Vedanta philosophy would remind us, mention of the hearing implies the

[1] The techniques of linguistics have not been developed to deal with language in general human terms. De Saussure stated his opinion that "le langage", that is, language in its most general sense, was *inconnaissable*. What he really meant was that "linguistique" as he knew it in the early years of this century had little or nothing technical to say of language in general human terms. That is still true. What is commonly called general phonetics merely codifies the results of detailed study of personal and social dialects. There are no acceptable definitions of word, sound or syllable in general human terms. Neither are the various phoneme concepts of universal application to human speech in general, whatever that might mean. Theories of sound symbolism in general human terms are nowhere taken seriously. Phonology, too, in spite of the labours of the Prague School and its followers, is exemplified by systematic studies of particular languages. General or universal grammar has no meaning in any of the recognized branches. Semantics is concerned with studies of the meaning and changes of meaning of specific language forms.

NB: The term "General Semantics" was used by the late Alfred Korzybski for a kind of linguistic therapy quite unrelated to technical linguistics.

[2] Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, 4 vols., Jonathan Cape, London, 1935; see especially III, 990–1119.

hearer of the hearing of the heard. What is the energy of listening? Of comprehension? Of aesthetic enjoyment? Besides, a man finds nothing worth listening to, if he cannot speak to himself. It is easier to analyse what happens in the air when we listen, than what goes on in the body when we speak.

If I am to use the word "language" without article to describe a main characteristic in general human terms, it could be linked with a general physiology of utterance (if one existed) and of its perception and also with the urges and drives in our human nature which impel us to make use of sounds, gestures, signs and symbols. The only mode of meaning assignable to language in this most general sense might be vaguely called communicativeness or the word *vox* might be used for it. It may eventually be shown on general musical grounds that human language has a phonetic and phonological mode of meaning. But at present not even music itself can be said to have a general mode of meaning. If mathematics may be said to have general modes of meaning, we are still lacking a general calculus of language.

Let us therefore apply the term linguistics to those disciplines and techniques which deal with institutionalized languages or dialects as such. A statement of the meaning of an isolate of any of these cannot be achieved at one fell swoop by one analysis at one level. Having made the first abstraction by suitably isolating a piece of "text" or part of the social process of speaking for a listener or of writing for a reader, the suggested procedure for dealing with meaning is its dispersion into modes, rather like the dispersion of light of mixed wave-lengths into a spectrum. First, there is the verbal process in the context of situation.[1] Social and personal commentary is especially relevant at this level. The technique of syntax is concerned with the word process in the sentence. Phonology states the phonematic and prosodic processes within the word and sentence, regarding them as a mode of meaning. The phonetician links all this with the processes and features of utterance. Such processes are characteristic of persons, of social groups, even of nations. Moreover, the general feature of voice quality is part of the phonetic mode of meaning of an English boy, a Frenchman or a lady from New York. Surely it is part of the meaning of an American to sound like one.

Even in a dictionary, the lexical[2] meaning of any given word is

[1] See my "Personality and Language in Society", and *Tongues of Men*, Watts & Co., London, 1937.

[2] See *New English Dictionary*, vol. I, Preface, pp. xxvii–xxxiv.

achieved by multiple statements of meaning at different levels. First, at the orthographic level the group of letters, *peer*, is distinguished from the group *pier*, and both of these from *pear*, *pair*, and *pare*. Next by means of some kind of phonetic notation the pronunciation is stated, and new identities arise. At least two grammatical designations are possible for *peer*, noun substantive or verb, and by making such statements at the grammatical level a further component of meaning is made explicit. Formal and etymological meaning may be added, together with social indications of usage, such as *colloquial, slang, nautical, vulgar, poetical.*

To make statements of meaning in terms of linguistics, we may accept the language event as a whole and then deal with it at various levels, sometimes in a descending order, beginning with social context and proceeding through syntax and vocabulary to phonology and even phonetics, and at other times in the opposite order, which will be adopted here since the main purpose is the exposition of linguistics as a discipline and technique for the statement of meanings without reference to such dualisms and dichotomies as word and idea, overt expressions and covert concepts, language and thought, subject and object. In doing this I must not be taken to exclude the concept of mind,[1] or to imply an embracing of materialism to avoid a foolish bogey of mentalism.

At the phonetic level no case has yet been made out for systematic sound symbolism or onomatopoeia in general human terms.[2] I have myself made experiments with speakers of many languages belonging to all the principal races and have found, with Koehler, evidence of some correlation of sounds with shapes (sense of feeling them or of drawing them).[3] The experiment consisted in drawing two shapes in line, one of a round bellying shape, "clumpy", and the other a sharp angular zig-zag of points prickling in all directions. Two words were then offered in sound and in roughly phonetic spelling as their names, viz. *kikeriki* and *oombooloo*. The only cases when *kikeriki* was chosen as a suitable name for the clumpy figure occurred when someone wished to enliven the proceedings and provide amusement, which he invariably did.

To begin with, we must apprehend language events in their contexts as shaped by the creative acts of speaking persons. Whenever a man speaks, he speaks in some sense as a poet. Poets have often emphasized

[1] See Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind*, 1949.

[2] See Bloomfield, *Language*, 1933.

[3] cf. W. Koehler, *Psychologische Probleme*, Berlin 1933, p. 153, and *Gestalt Psychology*, London 1930, pp. 186 f.

that a great deal of the beauty and meaning of the language of poetry is in the sound of it. If that be called the phonological mode of meaning, in poetry, it is a mode impossible of translation from one language into another.

In his dialogue on the critic as artist in *Intentions,* Wilde, who had a fine ear for a phrase, followed the Greeks in the appreciation of the high aesthetic values of language. The test applied by the Greeks, who criticized language more carefully than any other material, "was always the spoken word in its musical and metrical relations. The voice was the medium and the ear the critic." The story of Homer's blindness Wilde liked to think of "as an artistic myth". And he adds, "when Milton could no longer write, he began to sing".

> Words have not merely music as sweet as that of viol and lute, colour as rich and vivid as any that makes lovely for us the canvas of the Venetian or the Spaniard, and plastic form no less sure and certain than that which reveals itself in marble or in bronze but thought and passion and spirituality are theirs also, are theirs indeed alone. If the Greeks had criticized nothing but language, they would still have been the great art-critics of the world.

Such was Wilde's figurative realization of a literary approach to language analogous to what with another figure I have called a spectrum of modes of meaning.

The phonological mode of meaning in English is perhaps most easily isolated in nonsense verse such as Jabberwocky:

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
  Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogroves,
  And the mome raths outgrabe.

The prosodies of the stanza and especially the specific rhymes are English enough. So are the word-processes and most of the phonematic and prosodic processes.[1] *Brillig,* placed where it is, sounds and looks a pattern foreign to current English. *Slithy,* on the other hand, is familiar and undoubtedly pejorative. *Gimble* could probably be classed as an iterative or frequentative verb perhaps with diminutive and picturesque associations.[2]

[1] See "Sounds and Prosodies", *Transactions of the Philological Society,* 1948.

[2] Mrs. Tillotson tells me that this stanza, which, was first 'published' in MS. in a private family magazine in 1854, was then entitled "Stanza of Anglo-Saxon Poetry". It was printed in "gothic" characters and with more archaic spelling.

Continued on next page

These observations must not be interpreted in the sense of sound symbolism or of onomatopoeia. If we apply the test of frequent use, most native English words with initial *sl* seem to have been associated with pejorative contexts. There is, therefore, an association of social and personal attitude in recurrent contexts of situation with certain phonological features. This association is of course within the given speech community. In previous discussion of this mode of meaning, I invented a word, *phonaesthetic*,[1] to describe the association of sounds and personal and social attitudes, to avoid the misleading implications of *onomatopoeia* and the fallacy of sound symbolism.

Alliteration, assonance and the chiming of what are usually called consonants are common prosodic features of speech, and from the phonological point of view can be considered as markers or signals of word-structure or of the word-process in the sentence. Such features can be so distributed by a writer as to form part of artistic prosodies both in prose and verse.

This kind of phonological meaning in a language may be referred to as the prosodic mode. Really good dialogue in contemporary drama or other forms of modern prose literature requires almost unalterable patterns of stress, emphasis and intonation which are felt to be necessary. Such meaningful features are also in the prosodic mode. Prosodic features extend to the well-known markers and signals, for example, in Edward Lear's limericks. These are so well-known that they may serve as an illustration of the phonetic and phonological modes of meaning, including what I have referred to as the prosodic modes. Once started on a limerick, there are modal expectancies for the initiated at all these levels, at the grammatical, stylistic, and indeed at a variety of social levels. At this point in my argument, still confining our references to the language of limericks, I propose to bring forward as a technical term, meaning by "collocation", and to apply the test of "collocability".

(See S. D. Collingwood, *A Lewis Carrol Picture Book*, 1899, p. 37). Notes on the made-up words were appended, perhaps in mockery of current edited texts. Some of these explanations resemble Humpty Dumpty's in *Through the Looking-glass*, Chapter VI. Examples are:

BRYLLYG (derived from the verb to BRYL or BROIL). "The time of broiling dinner, i.e. the close of the afternoon."

SLYTHY (compounded of SLIMY and LITHE). "Smooth and active.["]

GYMBLE (whence GIMBLET) "to screw out holes in anything.["]

[1] See *Speech*, Benn, London, 1930, pp. 49–54, and "The Use and Distribution of Certain English Sounds", *English Studies*, XVII, February 1935, for word lists illustrating phonaesthetic association.

The following sentences show that part of the meaning of the word *ass* in modern colloquial English can be by collocation:

(i) An ass like Bagson might easily do that.
(ii) He is an ass.
(iii) You silly ass!
(iv) Don't be an ass!

One of the meanings of *ass* is its habitual collocation with an immediately preceding *you silly*, and with other phrases of address or of personal reference. Even if you said "An ass has been frightfully mauled at the Zoo", a possible retort would be, "What on earth was he doing?"

There are only limited possibilities of collocation with preceding adjectives, among which the commonest are *silly, obstinate, stupid, awful,* occasionally *egregious*. *Young* is much more frequently found than *old*. The plural form is not very common.

It must be pointed out that meaning by collocation is not at all the same thing as contextual meaning, which is the functional relation of the sentence to the processes of a context of situation in the context of culture.[1]

In the language of Lear's limericks, *man* is generally preceded by *old*, never by *young*. *Person* is collocated with *old* and *young*. There are only four *old ladies*—of Prague, of France, of Winchelsea, and the one "whose folly" rhymes with "holly". There is only one *girl*, "a young girl of Majorca, Whose aunt was a very fast walker". One of the "meanings" of *man* in this language is to be immediately preceded by *old* in collocations of the type, *There was an Old Man of . . . , Who* [or *Whose*] . . . , in which names like *Kamschatka* or *Jamaica* or *the East* frequently complete the "of" phrase. The collocability of *lady* is most frequently with *young*, but *person* with either *old* or *young*. In this amusing language there is no *boy* or *young man* or *woman*, neither are there any plurals for *man, person* or *lady*.

This kind of study of the distribution of common words may be classified into general or usual collocations and more restricted technical or personal collocations. The commonest sentences in which the words *horse, cow, pig, swine, dog*, are used with adjectives in nominal phrases, and also with verbs in the simple present, indicate characteristic distributions in collocability which may be regarded as a level of meaning in describing the English of any particular social group or indeed of one person. The word "time" can be used in collocations with or without

[1] See "The use and Distribution of Certain English Sounds," *English Studies*, XVII, February 1935.

articles, determinatives or pronouns. And it can be collocated with *saved, spent, wasted, frittered away,* with *presses, flies,* and with a variety of particles, even with *no*. Just as phonetic, phonological and grammatical forms well established and habitual in any close social group provide a basis for the mutual expectancies of words and sentences at those levels, and also the sharing of these common features, so also the study of the usual collocations of a particular literary form or genre or of a particular author, makes possible a clearly-defined and precisely stated contribution to what I have termed the spectrum of descriptive linguistics, which handles and states meaning by dispersing it in a range of techniques working at a series of levels.

The statement of meaning by collocation and various collocabilities does not involve the definition of word-meaning by means of further sentences in shifted terms. Meaning by collocation is an abstraction at the syntagmatic level and is not directly concerned with the conceptual or idea approach to the meaning of words. One of the meanings of *night* is its collocability with *dark,* and of *dark*, of course, collocation with *night*. This kind of mutuality may be paralleled in most languages and has resulted in similarities of poetic diction in literatures sharing common classical sources.

Examples may be taken almost at random from any English work at any period. *Gorboduc,* for instance; *The silent night, weary day, tender love, deadly strife, hateful strife, cruel wrath, manly breast, deep repentance, hold life in contempt, Is all the world drowned in blood and sunk in cruelty, learn to live in peace.* Or take Blake's *King Edward the Third*, the following verses of which may be made the basis of the guessing game of filling in blanks:

Let Liberty, the chartered right of Englishmen,
  Won by our fathers in many a glorious field,
And these fair youths, the flower of England,
  Venturing their lives in my most righteous cause,
Oh sheathe their hearts with triple[1] steel, that they
  May emulate their fathers' virtues.

There are many more of the same kind throughout this work, and of course a large number of collocations which have been common property for long periods and are still current even in everyday colloquial. This method of approach makes two branches of stylistics stand out more

[1] The residues of collocations do influence one another as we have seen in the phonaesthetic mode. What is the meaning of "Triple Shell"?

clearly: (a) the stylistics of what persists in and through change, and (b) the stylistics of personal idiosyncracies.

II

The study of collocation in a more generalized way could be used to describe the poetic diction of, say, Swinburne. Throughout his poetry Swinburne lays general constructions alongside each other, syntagmatically parallel collocations are a feature of verse-form and stanza-form, and often carry parallel phonaesthetic and prosodic features. The following examples are taken from "Before Dawn":

Delight, the rootless flower,
And Love, the bloomless bower:
Delight that lives an hour,
  And love that lives a day . . .

Sin sweet beyond forgiving
  And brief beyond regret.

The meaning of the next stanza can be almost completely stated in the lower modes previously illustrated, but especially in parallel grammatical collocations, parallel phonetic and prosodic meaning, all contributing to the verse prosodies:

Ah, one thing worth beginning,
One thread in life worth spinning,
Ah sweet, one sin worth sinning
With all the whole soul's will;
To lull you till one stilled you,
To kiss you till one killed you,
To feed you till one filled you,
Sweet lips, if love could fill.

In "The Garden of Proserpine" a great deal of the meaning is stated by making use of what I have called the lower or simpler modes at the phonetic, prosodic, grammatical and collocational levels.

Since Swinburne is the most "phonetic" of all English poets, let us apply the prism of linguistics to a few of his verses and examine the lower end of the spectrum stating partial meanings at abstracted levels or in certain modes. Opportunities for such experiments are numerous, and a good beginning may be made with "Quia Multum Amavit" in *Songs before Sunrise*.

Ah the banner-poles, the stretch of straightening streamers
  Straining their full reach out!

This occurs as the third couplet in a consecutive series of six beginning with *Ah the* and ending with a mark of exclamation. There are repeated Swinburnian patterns of collocation and also of grammatical mode. Normal grammatical markers such as *the, their, -ing, -er-s,* make possible a statement of meaning in the grammatical mode. All six exclamatory units, including the present example, are of nominal type, though three make use of finite verbs in dependent clauses. The prosodies of stress and intonation are fairly fixed and the end-words (*streamers* and *out!*) are linked by rhyme with the next end-words (*dreamers* and *doubt!*) Normal junction prosodies marking initials and finals of words in the sentence are there—for example, the sequence of *straightening . . . streamers . . . straining.* The alliterative use of *str-*, which is to be regarded as one initial unit, has been noticed in the mode of verse prosody as well as in the sentence prosodies. It must also be noticed in the phonaesthetic mode.[1] The words and phrases could be described as in the normal phonological mode of meaning. The *str-* words here can be grouped with many more English words often used in collocations and in contexts of situation referring to *long, lengthening, straight, stretched out* phenomena, involving both strength and stretching and a sort of active linearity, and which are used so often that when accumulated in a collocation such as the one quoted have a meaning which can be stated in the phonaesthetic mode. The phonaesthetic meaning of a collocation of several *str-* words of this type is to be taken in contrast with collocations of *cr-* words, *cl-* words.[1]

If the verses have the implication of a Southern English pronunciation, then normal statements can be made at the phonetic level.

At the level of meaning by word collocation, there is the interesting point that, both as a whole and in phrases, the collocations are unique and personal, that is to say, a-normal. In the wider context of the whole poem, even within the context of the six exclamatory units, similar collocations accumulate which must be referred to the personal stylistics of the poet, to what may indeed be called Swinburnese. But its English quality is in what I have called the lower modes, and that enables us to understand the common statement that most of Swinburne's poetry is untranslateable into any other language. This is true even of masses of writing inspired by Greek and Latin poetry, and of some writing inspired by French. In a similar way the modes of meaning of the following verses may be dispersed at various levels of abstraction:

[1] See below, *clogs* and *clings*.

(i) Ah the noise of horse, the charge and thunder of drumming,
And swaying and sweep of swords[1]
(ii) And prince that clogs, and priest that clings[2]
(iii) As the flash of the flakes of the foam flared lamplike . . . .[3]
(iv) Welling water's winsome word,
Wind in warm wan weather,[4]
(v) By the wind that went on the world's waste waters . . .[3]
(vi) And windy waves of woods[5]
(vii) What wind soever waft his will
Across the waves of day and night[6]
(viii) Sleek supple soul and splendid skin?[7]

The *w*- feature is to be noticed at the phonetic, phonological and phonaesthetic levels. At the phonological level it is an initial prosody in the word-process within the sentence, and by correlation with the prosodies of stress and intonation is also the alliterative feature of the verse prosody.

It will be clear that no attempt is made in the present analysis to exclude meaning from the consideration of language events or language isolates at any level. The phrase "lower modes of meaning" has been used to refer chiefly to the handling of meaning at the phonetic, phonological, prosodic and grammatical levels of abstraction. It is, however, to be understood that though the presentation of the scheme of analysis is in an ascending order from phonetics to the context of culture, the total complex, including what may be called the higher levels in the context of situation is a first postulate. The phonaesthetic mode, for example, correlates more closely than the phonetic mode with features of contexts of situation in which the personal and social attitudes are more easily apprehended in the light of ordinary experience.

Returning to Swinburne's poetic diction, further notions of generalized meaning may be applied to the statement of characteristic features in terms of syntax, word-formation and the association of synonyms, antonyms, contraries and complementary couples in one

[1] "Quia Multum Amavit". Phonaesthetic groups of words with *sw*– and certain finals, cf. *swoop, swipe, swagger, swoon, swish,* even *swing, swill, swell.*

[2] Note *cl*– group, alliteration and collocation of *prince* and *priest*, repetition of parallel phrases in the same grammatical phonaesthetic and phonological modes. "The Eve of Revolution".

[3] "Quia Multum Amavit".

[4] "A Child's Laughter".

[5] "A Song of Italy".

[6] "Prelude".

[7] "At A Month's End".

collocation. Analogous features may be found in groups of three or more associated words, and there are numerous instances of reversed and crossed antitheses, for example:

(i) Till life forget and death remember,
Till thou remember and I forget.[1]

(ii) The delight that consumes the desire,
The desire that outruns the delight.[2]

(iii) Change feet for wings or wings for feet.[3]

As an example of multiple word-polarities in one collocation, we could take two lines from stanza 14 of "The Eve of Revolution" in *Songs before Sunrise*:

. . . . . freedom clothed the naked souls of slaves
And stripped the muffled souls of tyrants bare

Stanza 5 of the poem "A Match" exemplifies many of the linguistic features previously suggested and provides the prosodic pattern of the stanza-form. It illustrates repeated collocations opening and closing the stanza in which there are three polarities. Parallel collocations with features reversed are illustrated in lines 5 and 6:

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May.[4]

A few examples may now be given to illustrate phrase-formation and the association of words above referred to. The poem "Prelude" introducing *Songs before Sunrise* provides many examples. Throughout Swinburne's writing nouns in strings of two's and three's or even more occur in the same collocation, and the meaning may largely be studied in the modes already indicated:

[1] "Itylus".
[2] "Dolores".
[3] "At A Month's End".
[4] "A Match".

(i) From eyes and tresses flowers and tears,
From heart and spirit hopes and fears.

(ii) With souls that pray and hope and hate. . . . .
And dance and wring their hands and laugh,
And weep thin tears and sigh light sighs.

The first eight phrases quoted below illustrate another common feature, the use of derivatives of the same base within the same collocation. The last also shows a common Swinburnian polarity:

(i) . . . . . for a little we live, and life hath mutable wings.[1]

(ii) So long I endure, no longer; and laugh not again, neither weep.[1]

(iii) She sees all past things pass,[2]

(iv) And wings of swift spent hours
Take flight and fly;[2]

(v) Soft as breathless ripples that softly shoreward sweep,[3]

(vi) Landor, once thy lover, a name that love reveres: [3]

(vii) O Garment not golden but gilded,[4]

(viii) And press with new lips where you pressed.
For my heart too springs up at the pressure,[4]

(ix) The life unlived, the unsown seeds,
Suns unbeholden, songs unsung, and undone deeds.[5]

Nominal phrases in which the substantive is preceded and followed by adjectives provide a framework for all the lower modes of meaning. For example:

(i) And dreams of bitter sleep and sweet,[6]

[1] "Hymn to Proserpine".
[2] "Before the Mirror".
[3] "A Ballad of Bath".
[4] "Dolores".
[5] "Blessed Among Women".
[6] "Prelude".

(ii) And die beneath blind skies or blue[1]
(iii) Of barren delights and unclean,[2]

From the point of view of linguistic criticism there is sufficient evidence to show that much of the Swinburnese vocabulary, embedded in his typical collocations with their prosodies, takes its form from his patterns of opposition, requiring such phrases as "Mis-trust and trust,"[1] He had to use such words as "miscreate,"[1] "misconceived,"[3] "misbegotten,"[4] "disengirdled,"[1] "discrowned,"[1] "undisbranched,"[4] and hundreds of adjectives in "-less," —"With footless joy and wingless grief, And twinborn faith and disbelief."[1], "red pulseless planet"[5], "The shameless nameless love,"[5] "flowerless rose,"[6] "plumeless boughs,"[6] "dim green dayless day."[7]

As a further example of parallel collocations and regular patterns of repetition in the verse prosodies, the six opening and concluding distichs of the six stanzas of "A Match" are tabulated below:

Lines 1 and 7

Stanza	*First Place*	*Second Place*	*Third Place*	*Fourth Place*
1	if	love	were	what the { rose is
2		I		what the { words are
3		you		life, my darling
4				thrall to sorrow
5				April's lady
6				queen of pleasure

Twelve pieces for twenty-four places.

Lines 2 and 8

Stanza	*First Place*	*Second Place*	*Third Place*	*Fourth Place*
1	and	I	were	like the { leaf
2		love		like the { tune
3		[I]	your love	[were] death
4		I	were	page to joy
5				lord in May
6				king of pain

Twelve pieces for twenty-four places, twenty-two pieces for forty-eight places.

[1] "Prelude".
[2] "Dolores".
[3] "The Triumph of Time".
[4] "Tenebrae".
[5] "Faustine".
[6] "A Vision of Spring in Winter".
[7] "Félise".

In stanza 5 there are three pairs of polarities in the opening and concluding distichs.

A detailed study of the words and pieces of Swinburne's poetry would be laborious, and most scholars would be satisfied to guess the probable result. I offer a few examples of (1) pieces employing the participial forms *clothed, clad, girt:* "Clothed round with the strength of night", "Clothed with delight, by the might of a dream," "One warm dream clad about with a fire," "Clothed with powers", "Clothed with the wind's wings," "Clothed about with flame and with tears," "girt about with," "Intolerable, not clad with death or life;" and (2) participial compounds:

> White-eyed and poisonous-finned, shark-toothed and serpentine-curled.[1]

Commenting on this verse in terms of the lower half of the spectrum, the first item is notice of the two parallel collocations, and then to add the prosodic features marking the two pairs of participial compounds, themselves described at the grammatical level, completing the picture in the phonaesthetic mode and finally stating the congruence of all these in the verse prosody.

All this should be done after the contextual study of the whole poem has been attempted by the methods of linguistics.

Swinburne's verse should also be criticized by those concerned at the higher levels of the spectrum. This would mean its examination within the culture context, which includes what is offered by biography and history. To the scheme already outlined further categories may be added at the levels of grammar, word-formation or descriptive etymology, and also of collocation or phrasal stylistics, a few of which have been exemplified. Even a casual reader of Swinburne will soon appreciate that he is in a strange world in which contrast and concord are one and contraries divine. *Life* and *death, night* and *day, vices* and *virtues, waves sand sea* and *foam, fire* and *flame, deserts* and *blossoms, seeds* and *flowers, deaths births* and *ghosts, wine poison* and *blood, snakes* and *fangs, kisses* and *hisses, fervent* and *frigid, sterile barren* and *fruitful, heaven* and *hell,* commonly occur together (as grouped by the punctuation) in the same collocation.

I may end these notes on Swinburne by remarking that "the philo-

[1] "Pan and Thalassius", "Recollections", "Hesperia", "Félise", "Sapphics", "A Ballad of Bath", "Who Hath Given Man Speech", "Hymn to Proserpine".

sophy of Swinburne's poetry" forms no part of a linguist's technical language. Not that philosophers have a language for this either. The statement of his philosophy by a philosopher would be almost impossible without a previous analysis of Swinburne's language. The philosopher might then agree with the linguist that there was nothing more to be done, for clearly Swinburne had nothing to say as a philosopher in the language of philosophy.

On the basis of half a dozen poems,[1] a sort of poet's philosophy could be expressed in other words and imputed to Swinburne. We might call it a kind of holism supported by pan-humanism and worship of

> The earth-soul Freedom, that only
> Lives, and that only is God.[2]

Before leaving Swinburne the victim of analysis at the lower end of the spectrum, it must be understood that no aesthetic or literary valuation has been attempted. Since I have not employed the language of literary criticism and since I have not even implied any criticism of such language, I should like to quote from the leading article in a well-known weekly,[3] to illustrate a quite different type of language about Swinburne. The first quotation applies almost exactly to what has happened to the present writer:

> The mind, therefore, which returns to Swinburne in middle life is not entirely unprepared for the discovery that its early doubts about the quality of the master's thought were well founded. A great deal of what he wrote is seen to be nonsense—and pernicious nonsense at that. Perhaps some part of the blame is to be imputed to the reader,

[1] See, for example, "Hertha", "Genesis", "To Walt Whitman in America", "Tenebrae", "Tiresias".

[2] The poetical languages of English writers on autumn were recently brought to my attention by "The Transit of Autumn", a middle article contributed by Lord Dunsany to *The Observer*. Applying the scheme of analysis exemplified above, I found the results were in general terms similar. You must use the words *spring, summer, autumn* and *winter* and a stock of collocabilities. Having announced in the second paragraph that "Autumn" is "a queen although not yet crowned", you string out the range of meaning by collocation through the remaining six paragraphs—*robed, glory, crowned, resplendent, no singers go before her, prophets, the old regime, the reign, allegiance to new queen, proclaims, gold, throne, bodyguard, treasure, dynasty, court, the last dance of the leaves.*

[3] "On Re-reading Swinburne", *Times Literary Supplement*, November 17, 1950.

since what is good reading for a man at one age may be fairly poor at another. That is a truth from which critics are apt to shrink.

My second quotation employs a different sort of language about language from that normally used in linguistics, including usages which have the features of value judgments, though here and there such words as *alliterations, inversions, chime, rhyme, couplet, stanza, words, phrases,* necessarily appear:

> Swinburne . . . whose eloquence is so often mere rhetoric, and whose loves and passions have no more reality than that of a deliberately induced mood . . . The old magic of words is still, in many passages, there, so that sixty goes about murmuring a couplet or a stanza over and over again a whole day on end, just as did twenty. The foaming torrent of alliterations, double-rhymes, and Greek names may be sheer literary violence—but it still carries the reader away. The juggling with a small group of phrases or rhymes may be a trick—but with what grace and skill the juggler throws and catches them in every conceivable sequence and combination, and how exquisitely balanced and contrasted are his inversions. . . . The gloomy magnificence of . . . can escape the ear no more than the simpler, languorous, melancholy charm of "Rococo". . . . The chime of the words—first read so long ago and since half-forgotten—rings once more incessantly in the mind, soaking through the hide and limbs of middle-age to the heart. Time is cast away, the world is forty years younger, and manhood back at its fresh, unknowing, unreasoning dawn.

It is entirely suitable that the somewhat impersonal experience expressed in the concluding paragraph is expressed anonymously. Can this also, like so much more, be "mere rhetoric" having "no more reality than that of a deliberately induced mood"? A linguist, as I have already said, is not at home in such idiom, and though I have raised the question by quoting the article, I have no means of answering it.

The examination of Swinburne's poetic diction has emphasized the idiosyncrasies which make it so personal that it can be called Swinburnese. It has been found possible to do this without reference to the higher levels of the spectrum of meaning, such as those provided by the biographical and cultural contexts.

III

Let us now turn to linguistic material of a very different kind, which requires the application of the categories of the context of situation,[1] in order to complete the statement of meaning by collocation. A cursory examination of certain letters of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries[2] clearly shows collocations which will be recognized as current for at least two hundred years—that is as part of the common stock of what we may call recent modern English.

In studying the extracts we note that many collocations are still generally current. In setting them out I have enclosed in brackets "pieces" which to me seem glaringly obsolete.

The first extract is from Dr. Johnson's letter to the Earl of Chesterfield, dated February 7, 1755:

> (i) [To be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.]
>
> (ii) [When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending;]

Applying the categories of the context of situation and of meaning by collocation, it will be seen that very little survives that could be considered current today.

Applying similar categories it will be agreed that the language used by William Wilberforce to the Earl of Galloway in a letter from the House

[1] See works previously quoted, especially "Personality and Language in Society", *The Sociological Review*, vol. XLII, Section II, 1950, p. 7: "a group of categories forming a schematic construct for application to typical repetitive 'events' in the social process. A. The Relevant features of participants: persons, personalities. (i) The Verbal Action of the Participants. (ii) The Non-verbal Action of the Participants. B. The Relevant Objects. C. The Effect of the Verbal Action."

[2] For convenience I have drawn them from (a) *English Letters of the XVIII Century*", edited by James Aitken (Pelican), and (b) *English Letters of the XIX Century*, edited by James Aitken (Pelican). The study of letters, if it is to be a scientific study, requires an examination of the MSS.—that is, of the material before it has been tampered with by editors and printers.

of Commons on December 3rd, 1800, is much nearer to contemporary usage:

> (iii) Through the medium of the great clubs, Etc., one set of opinions manners, modes of living, Etc., are diffused through a vast mass [of the higher orders.] Domestic restraints, and family economy, and order, [are voted bores,] [while, from the nature of our constitution,] aided by the increasing wealth and the prevailing sentiments of the age, whatever ways of thinking, speaking, and acting become popular [in the higher classes,] soon spread through every other.

What Wilberforce has to say in the above quotation is relevant to one of the purposes of the present essay, which is to draw attention to the stylistics of the letters of upper class society in the eighteenth century and to similar features in what is today considered good standard English for everyday use in polite society. The great Doctor did not belong to the class which developed modern polite colloquial style, as the following extracts from his more familiar letters will illustrate.

> (iv) Apologies are seldom of any use. We will delay till your arrival the reasons, good or bad, which have made me [such a sparing and ungrateful] correspondent.

> (v) I went away from Lichfield ill, and have had a troublesome time [with my breath;] for some weeks I have been [disordered by a cold,] [of which I could not get the violence abated till I had been let blood three times.]

> (vi) [The usurpation of the nobility, for they apparently usurp all the influence they gain by fraud and misrepresentation,] I think it certainly lawful, perhaps your duty, to resist. What is not their own, [they have only by robbery.]

In the above extracts the English is dated, at almost all levels, and in a systematic study of all Johnson's letters as well as of similarly dated material the linguistic features would have to be stated.

The following interesting sentence from a letter to Mrs. Porter in 1782 is almost contemporary at the level of collocation:

> (vii) I have, by advertising, found poor Mr. Levett's brothers in Yorkshire, who will take the little he has left;

Since the above has the implication of utterance, we must know whether Mr. Levett is dying or already dead, before we read the last clause. If he

is still alive, then we may stress both the words *has* and *left*, but if the reference is to a will,[1] then *has* must be unstressed. From the point of view of present-day English "by advertising" should begin the sentence, or better, be replaced by some reference to the newspapers. In a full statement of the elements of the context of situation, Johnson's method of advertising would have to be known.

The two following sentences make use of the word "want" which at the grammatical level of meaning is a verb. The meaning by collocation stands, but differs in situations.

(viii) I want every comfort.

(ix) I can only recommend a rule which you do not want; give as little pain as you can.

The first sentence could quite well be used in talking to a reception clerk at a first-class hotel. But by extending the collocation, and by reference to the situational context, the meaning is seen to be very different.[2]

There are of course a large number of collocations in Johnson's letters which are clichés of present day writing, such as:

(x) Begin again where you left off.
(xi) Let me have a long letter from you as soon as you can.

And it is interesting to notice that an old-established part of the meaning of *neglected* is collocation with *criminally*:

(xii) You are not to think yourself forgotten, or criminally neglected.

Johnson's English in all his prose styles examined objectively and statistically in connexion with a biographical study of his personality would give

[1] He died the following year.

[2] See also *English Synonymes* explained by George Crabb, 3rd edition, 1824:
'{ WANT, *v. Poverty*.
{ To Want, Need, Lack.

To be without is the common idea expressed by these terms; but to WANT is to be without that which contributes to our comfort, or is an object of our desire;

From the close connexion which subsists between desiring and *want*, it is usual to consider what we *want* as artificial, and what we *need* as natural and indispensable:

tender people *want* a fire when others would be glad not to have it;

He who *wants* nothing is a happy man: he who *needs* nothing, may be happy if he *wants* no more than he has; for then he *lacks* that which alone can make him happy, which is contentment.'

us a statement of stylistics in a social setting which would mark it off sharply from the English of such letter writers as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Mrs. Delany, Horace Walpole, Fanny Burney and Lord Byron. A linguistic study of the letters of the upper class seems to show persistent features of what we call the King's English in modern times, and these features have been shared by increasing numbers of writers and speakers in the nineteenth century and up to the present time, largely perhaps as a result of the influence of the big public schools, the older universities, and the snob value of the aristocratic. The Johnsonian styles at a fairly high social level have of course, been common, and so have other styles suggesting that the speaker or writer had "swallowed a dictionary", or spoke "like a school book". We frequently ask people to say what they mean in words of one syllable, and there is much talk today about plain English.[1] As George Orwell's satire[1] suggests, Oldspeak is perhaps being replaced by Newspeak. Should the snob value of Newspeak establish itself, the spectrum of meaning analysis might then describe the new language at all levels from pronunciation through word distribution in collocations to the study of the processes of the newer contexts of situation.

Turning to the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to the Countess of Mar, the Countess of Bute and others of her friends and perhaps equals, we find a number of characteristics of the King's English which are still promoted by a good family upbringing, and by education at a good school. The written use of *don't* and the collocations of the participles in *-ing* are especially to be noted.

(xiii) In my opinion, dear S., I ought rather to quarrel with you for not answering my Nimeguen letter of August till December, *than to excuse my not writing again* till now. I am sure there is on my side a very good excuse for silence, having [gone such tiresome land-journeys,] though I don't find [the conclusion of them] so bad as you seem to imagine.

(xiv) Those dreadful stories you have heard of the *plague* have very little foundation in truth.

(xv) To reconcile myself to the sound of a word which has always given me such terrible ideas, though I am convinced there is little more in it than in a fever. As a proof of this, let me tell you that we passed through two or three towns [most violently infected.]

[1] See, e.g., Sir Ernest Gowers's *Plain Words*, 1948, and George Orwell's *Nineteen eighty-four*, 1948.

(xvi) Luckily for me. . . .

(xvii) who are very fond of speaking of what they don't [know].

(xviii) If you don't like my choice of subjects, tell me what you would [have me write upon;]

(xix) which I don't think so bad as you have perhaps heard it represented. I am a very good judge of [their eating,] having lived three weeks in the house of an *effendi* at Belgrade, who gave us very magnificent dinners,

(xx) and I am extremely glad I was so [complaisant.]

(xxi) I am willing to take your word for it,

(xxii) I am satisfied I have been one of the *condemned* ever since I was born; and in submission to the divine justice I don't at all doubt but I deserved it in some pre-existent state. I will still hope that I am only in purgatory; and that after whining [and grunting] a certain number of years, I shall be translated to some more happy sphere, where virtue will be natural, and custom reasonable; that is, in short, where common sense will reign. I grow very devout, as you see, and place all my hopes in the next life, being totally persuaded of the nothingness of this. Don't you remember how miserable we were in the little parlour at Thoresby? we then thought marrying would put us at once into possession of all we wanted.[1] Then came being with child, etc., and you see what comes of being with child. Though, after all, I am still of opinion, that it is extremely silly to submit to ill fortune.

(xxiii) Every thing may turn out better than you expect.

Further extracts from the letters of Mrs. Delany and Fanny Burney, Madame D'Arblay, will confirm the impressions gained from those of Lady Mary. Burke remarked in a letter to Fanny Burney that he hardly dare tell her his opinion of her place "in an age distinguished by producing extraordinary women".

(xxiv) then we start up, run away, and here I am, brimful of a thousand things to say to you, but have no time to write them, and that you know is a sad case. You and I perfectly agree in what you say of Sir John Stanley and my brother.

(xxv) I don't find that the troubles of the times have given any check to gay doings in this part of the world.

[1] Cf. Johnson's use of *want*, p. 137 above.

(xxvi) but it is something like [*inoculating for the small pox*], one does not care to *advise either for or against;*

(xxvii) I don't think there can be anything wrong in your writing to Mr. R. about poor H. Viney, if you think he will not mention the writing to anybody, but one of the crying sins of this world is the laxity of the tongue. How few people understand the perfection of silence on most occasions.

(Note again the participle *-ing* preceded by a conjunct personal pronoun.)

(xxviii) God forbid you should *stop your hand* when correction is necessary! and surely it must be so on such an occasion as that was, though I don't suppose the dear child meant the harm she did;

It is clear that the prosodies are very like those of present day speech and emphasis falls on *must, that* and *meant.*

(xxix) To Mrs. Dewes, Bath, 28 Oct. 1760.
I have just been hunting the shops, and am not half equipped. Surely this is the busiest idle place in the world, and yet I have not once been in the Rooms, only one morning for three minutes at Wiltshire's.

(xxx) I did not expect to hear [you lost your giddiness at once,] but [I hope in God] it will by degrees wear away; however, all means should be tried, and I hear so much from everybody of the great efficacy of the Bristol waters, that I hope you will take it into consideration; and if the doctors are not against your trying it, lose no time.

(xxxi) well taken care of,

(xxxii) Mr. Sloper . . . has been much offended that his daughter was not taken out to dance; she was the first night, and a sensible, clever woman whose daughter was taken out after her *refused* to let her dance; this put a stop to Miss Cibber's being asked again; and on Sunday night, [in the midst of the Rooms], Mr. Cibber collared poor Collet, abusing him at the same time, and asking if he had been the occasion [of the affront put upon his daughter]; he said it was '*by Mr. Nash's direction*'—the poor wretch is *now* wheeled into the Rooms;

(xxxiii) Yesterday I had a letter from Lady Weymouth, who had [but] just heard of our being at Bath: she comes here for a day or two on purpose to see me, and dines with us today.

(xxxiv) I cannot sit down in my usual place without thinking of my

dear little Portia, tho' not so selfish as to wish her skipping about me, tho' *that* would be very pleasant; but her dear mama has the first claim.

The collocation *taken out to dance* could still be used, but in a different context of situation, and in a background of very different manners. The use of an emphatic *was* in *she was the first night,* is another indication of the persistence of characteristic prosodies over long periods of time. Note four further examples of the *-ing* participle, and three with preceding genitive.

(xxxv) Another of his confessions was this:—

(xxxvi) 'Luckily for me,' said he, 'I have no occasion to speak till about two o'clock, when we dine, for that keeps me fresh. If I were to begin earlier, I should only be like skimmed milk the rest of the day.'

(xxxvii) Mrs. Astley, however, assured me she was pretty well.

(xxxviii) She took the time the Queen so considerately gave her for deliberation, and she consulted with some of her old friends. They all agreed there must be no refusal, and, [after many circumstances] too long [for writing], though otherwise well worth knowing, [Lady Weymouth was made the messenger of] her Majesty's offer being accepted.

(xxxix) would there be any harm in my using it to make a visit to Twickenham?

Again the prosodies are familiar, and a further example of a participial construction in *-ing -ed* preceded by a genitival nominal phrase, *her Majesty's offer*. Note the participial phrase *my using* in an entirely contemporary collocation *would there be any harm in my using it?*

Features we have already noticed appear frequently in the letters of Fanny Burney (1752–1840) from which the following extracts are selected:

(xl) I have for some time seen very plainly that you are [éprise,] and have been extremely uneasy at the discovery.

(xli) *Wednesday.* I broke off and an incapable unwillingness seized my pen; but I hear you are not well, and I hasten—if that be a word I can ever use again—to make personal inquiry how you are.

(xlii) I have been very ill, very little *apparently*, but with nights of [consuming] restlessness and tears. I have now called in Dr. Holland, who understands me marvellously, and am now much as usual; no, not that—still tormented with nights [without repose]—but better.

(xliii) My spirits have been dreadfully saddened of late by whole days—[nay] weeks—of helplessness [for any employment.]

The letters of Horace Walpole (1717–1797) are extremely interesting from the regressive point of view—regressive, that is, in the light of common present-day usage. In the following extensive extracts there are a large number of usual collocations which must have been common in good society both in everyday talk and familiar correspondence:

(xliv) It would have been inexcusable in me, in our present circumstances, and after all I have promised you, not to have written to you for this last month, if I had been in London; but I have been at Mount Edgecumbe, and so constantly [upon] the road, that I neither received your letters, had time to write, or knew what to write. I came back last night, and found [three packets] from you, which I have no time to answer, and [but] just time to read. The confusion I have found, and the danger we are in, prevent my talking of anything else. The young Pretender, at the head of three thousand men, has got a march on General Cope, who is not eighteen hundred strong; and when the last accounts came away, was fifty miles nearer Edinburgh than Cope, and by this time is there. The clans will not rise for the Government; the Dukes of Argyll and Athol [are come post to town,] not having been able to raise a man.

Again quite modern at all levels but the social context. Note *prevent my talking of anything else* and *not having been able to raise a man.*

(xlv) that [an express] came last night with an account of their being at Edinburgh to the number of five thousand.

Note again *an account of their being at Edinburgh to the number of five thousand.*

(xlvi) But all this is not the worst!

(xlvii) Against this force we have—I don't know what——

(xlviii) I am grieved to tell you all this; but when it is so, how can I avoid telling you?

(xlix) We expect every moment to hear that . . .

(l) Lord Granville and his faction persist in persuading the King, that it is an affair of no consequence.

(li) Vernon, that simple noisy creature, has hit upon a scheme that is of great service; he had [laid Folkestone cutters] all around the coast,

which are continually relieved, [and bring constant notice of everything that stirs.]

(lii) I confess my own apprehensions are not near so strong as they were; and if we get over this, I shall believe that we never can be hurt; for we never can be more exposed to danger.

(liii) the King has declared publicly to the Ministry, that he has been told of the great [civilities] which he was said to show to her at Hanover; that he protests he showed her only the common [civilities] due . . . that he never intended to take any particular notice of her; nor had, nor would let my Lady Yarmouth. In fact, my Lady Yarmouth peremptorily refused . . . and when she did go with my Lady Pomfret, the King [but just] spoke to her. She declares her intention of staying in England,

These passages contain several familiar clichés and an interesting emphatic *did*.

(liv) I forgot to tell a *bon-mot* of Leheup on her first coming over; he was asked if he would not go and see her? He replied, 'No, I never visit modest women.' Adieu! my dear child! I flatter myself you will collect hopes from this letter.

Note *on her first coming over*.

(lv) By their not advancing, I conclude that either the Boy and his council could not prevail on the Highlanders to leave their own country, or that they were not strong enough, and still wait for foreign assistance, which, in a new declaration, he intimates that he still expects.

Note *By their not advancing*.

(lvi) I don't think, considering the crisis, that the House was very full.

(lvii) With all this, I am far from thinking that they are so confident and sanguine as their friends at Rome.

(lviii) You may imagine how little I like our situation; but I don't despair.

(lix) I write you [but short letters,] considering the circumstances of the time; but I hate to send you paragraphs only to contradict them again: I still less choose to forge events; and, indeed, am glad I have so few to tell you.

(lx) though the roads are exceedingly bad and great quantities of snow have fallen.

(lxi) he insists on a declaration of our having nothing to do with the continent. He mustered his forces, but did not notify his intention;

Note *a declaration of our having nothing to do with the continent,* and common collocations.

(lxii) You have bid me for some time to send you good news—well! I think I will.

(lxiii) But what is more astonishing, Sherlock, who has much better sense,

(lxiv) If it was not too long to transcribe, I would send you an entertaining petition of the [periwigmakers] to the King, in which they complain that men *will* wear [their own hair].

An interesting sign of new manners, and a question of the emphasis on *will.*

(lxv) If he dies of it,—and how should he not?—it will sound very silly when Hercules or Theseus ask him what he died of, to reply, 'I caught my death on a damp staircase at a new club-room.'

(lxvi) Sure power must have some strange unknown charm, when it can compensate for such contempt! I see many who triumph in these bitter pills which the ministry are so often forced to swallow; I own I do not; it is more mortifying to me to reflect how great and respectable we were three years ago than satisfactory to see those insulted who have brought such shame upon us. ['Tis poor amends] to national honour to know, that if a printer is [set in the pillory,] his country wishes it was [my] Lord This, or Mr. That. They will be gathered to the Oxfords, and Bolingbrokes, and ignominious of former days; but the wound they have inflicted is perhaps indelible. That goes to *my* heart, who had felt all the Roman pride of being one of the first nations upon earth!—Good night!—I will go to bed, and dream of Kings drawn in triumph; and then I will go to Paris, and dream I am pro-consul there; [pray,] take care not to let me be awakened with an account of an invasion having taken place from Dunkirk! Yours ever,

(lxvii) Mr. Chute tells me that you have taken a new house in Squireland, and have given yourself up for two years more [to port and parsons.] I am very angry, and resign you to the works of the devil or the church, I don't care which. You will get the gout, turn

Methodist, and expect to ride to heaven upon your own great toe. I was happy with your telling me how well you love me, and though I don't love loving, I could have poured out all the fulness of my heart to such an old and true friend; but what am I the better for it, if I am to see you [but] two or three days in the year?

(lxviii) Your wit and humour will be as much lost upon them, as if you talked the dialect of Chaucer; for with all the divinity of wit, it grows out of fashion [like a fardingale.] I am convinced that the young men at White's already laugh at George Selwyn's *bon mots* only by tradition. I avoid talking before the youth of the age as I would dancing before them; for if one's tongue [don't] move in the steps of the day, and thinks to please by its old graces, it is only an object of ridicule, [like Mrs. Hobart in her cotillon.] I tell you we should get together, and comfort ourselves with reflecting on the brave days that we have known—not that I think people were a jot more clever or wise in our youth than they are now; but as my system is always to live in a vision as much as I can, and as vision's don't increase with years, there is nothing so natural as to think one remembers what one does not remember.

(lxix) If you are like me, you are fretting at the weather.

(lxx) My plan is to pass away calmly; cheerfully if I can; sometimes to amuse myself with the rising generation, but to take care not to fatigue them, nor weary them with old stories, which will not interest them, as their adventures do not interest me.

(lxxi) In short, they are a pleasant medicine, that one should take care not to grow fond of.

(lxxii) Good night? You see I never let our long-lived friendship drop, though you give it so few opportunities of breathing.

(lxxiii) But I seem to choose to read futurity, because I am not likely to see it: indeed I am most rational when I say to myself, What is all this to me?

(lxxiv) By the tenth article of the capitulation, Lord Cornwallis demanded that the loyal Americans in his army should not be punished. This was flatly refused, and he has left them to be hanged. [I doubt] no vote of Parliament will be able [to blanch] such a—such a—I don't know what the word is for it; he must get his uncle the Archbishop to christen it; there is no name for it in any Pagan vocabulary. I suppose it will have a patent for being called Necessity. Well! there ends another volume of the American war. It looks a little as if the history of it would be all we should have for it, except forty millions of debt.

(lxxv) These are certainly the speculations of an idle man, and the more trifling when one considers the moment.

The preceding extracts contain examples of long-standing collocations, though they also carry unmistakable marks of the social context of the eighteenth century.

Walpole died just before the turn of the century. As herald of the nineteenth I have chosen William Wilberforce. Wilberforce wrote a familiar letter to Pitt in September 1804, which provides interesting linguistic material with the highest social sanction. Stylistically, it is more contemporary than what has been shown of Walpole, perhaps less aristocratic.

(lxxvi) Fifthly, and last, not least, let me beg you, my dear Pitt, to have the proclamation issued for stopping the Guiana supply of slaves. If I felt less on that subject, I should say more; but I really do feel [on it] very deeply, and so I know you would also, if your attention were not absorbed by such a number of pressing matters: but it will not cost you half an hour I hope to settle this. I beg you will remember how much I myself am personally concerned in it, if any other excuse be necessary for my boring you so about it than the merits of the subject itself. I cannot doubt that —, and others of his set in abolition matters, will renew the attack they formerly made on me, on account of my not having endeavoured to stop this supply of slaves to the conquered settlements. I trust, however, that I need not assure you that the thing itself, far more than what any one can say on it, weighs on my mind. I repeat it, half an hour would settle the whole—the forms are at hand in the Council Office.

There is another *-ing -ed* participial phrase, *on account of my not having endeavoured to stop* . . . and there are *a number of pressing matters,* even *the forms are at hand in the Council office.* The earliest citation by the *N.E.D.* of *form* in the sense of 'a formulary document with blanks for the insertion of particulars' is dated 1855. The word as used here may bear this sense.

(lxxvii) Seventhly, I cannot help saying a word or two on a subject on which I have thought, at least daily, for many months—that I mean of the Volunteer command. Surely you will not, if there should be any landing, take your [station] as colonel of the corps, but remember that you are the mainspring of the whole machine, and there is a reason peculiar to the times or the persons [in certain high situations,] which renders it indispensable, both on grounds of duty and character, that you should be [in a station] from which you can issue general orders, applicable to all the parts of the complicated system of measures. You naturally do not hear much concerning

the commander-in-chief, but I do not believe people [think of him half as well as he deserves.] Their chief reason for not being much more discontented than they are, and still more than they [avow themselves to be], is, that they believe if any thing serious really were to happen, *you* would sit in council with him, and they give him credit for a disposition to follow your advice. Let me beg you to destroy this, which I am sure you will ascribe to its true motives, regard for the public interest, and personally to yourself.

I am ever,

My dear P.,

Affectionately and sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Pitt is *the mainspring of the whole machine* and is responsible for the *issue of general orders, applicable to all the parts of the complicated system of measures.* These collocations must have been fairly common at the time. Wilberforce used them rather than invented them. They can still be used to-day.

(lxxviii) There can be no objection to his enlightening the minds of the good people of Holland on the subject of the slave trade.

Clearly set in the nineteenth-century context and familiar in all modes of meaning. Another participial phrase with genitive pronoun as part of a nominal phrase.

(lxxix) . . . you must have had a copy of it, and I hope you read it; it was a very good summary.

(lxxx) Pitt, and you yourself also, are far better judges than I can be, whether it would be proper to go the length of taking any such step as that which Brougham recommends.

(lxxxi) Do you remember my asking you, [by Brougham's desire,] whether you had any objection to his passing through Holland in his way to Vienna, Etc.?

Two participles in *-ing* preceded by genitival pronouns.

(lxxxii) Really, the idea of a war between our two countries is perfectly horrible; and I am happy to say, that I think, in this country, this most just sentiment gains ground. Like all propositions which are founded in truth and reason, it gradually sinks into the minds of men, and, though perhaps slowly and insensibly, by degrees it leavens

> nearly the whole mass. It will tend to produce this friendly disposition on your side of the water, if more of your countrymen would come over and live awhile among us. We are not an idle people; we are a busy people, and may not have leisure or disposition to pay all the personal attentions which politeness might prescribe; but I am persuaded that any gentleman of character and moderation, who should visit this country, would meet with such a friendly reception as would show him that the circumstance of our being the descendants [of common progenitors] is not forgotten, or rather, that it is reviving and diffusing itself with increasing force.

Much less familiar but unmistakably democratic and nearer to contemporary modes than Walpole.

> (lxxxiii) and really the business of parliament has increased so much of late years, as to render it next to impossible for any man who cannot live for six or seven months, in every year, with a very small proportion of food or sleep, especially the latter, to attend at all, as he would otherwise be glad to do, to domestic or social claims.

With this last emphasis on the arrival of features of life and language well-known to all of us today, I may conclude by indicating once more the main theme of this essay on linguistic description. It is an outline sketch suggesting by hints the sort of language a linguist might develop in order to describe language by making statements of meaning at a series of levels.

The presentation of the linguistic features which I have made above transcends the historical order. At the outset I illustrated as many modes of meaning as possible from the language forms themselves. Licensed to create his own diction, the poet so shapes his composition or design that a great deal of its meaning is the form he gives it. For such form, for such personal usage and style, the choice of Swinburne was for me an inevitable choice. I have made no attempt to show how Swinburne's diction is narrowly dated and determined in nineteenth-century history.

The letters bear the marks of the eighteenth century; but my purpose in presenting them was to view them regressively noticing those linguistic features which seem to persist as normal usage over long periods.

IV

Finally I would return to Wilde's dialogue "The Critic as Artist" to emphasize the importance of the application of descriptive linguistics to modern, including contemporary, English by the schools of English in our Universities. Writing of the Greeks and Greek, he reminds us

forcibly "that the material they criticized with most care was language." Turning to England, he puts the case for criticism in his own idiom as follows:

> England has done one thing; it has invented and established Public Opinion, which is an attempt to organise the ignorance of the community, and to elevate it to the dignity of physical force. But Wisdom has always been hidden from it.[1]
>
> You have asked me about the influence of Criticism. I think I have answered that question already; but there is this also to be said. It is Criticism that makes us cosmopolitan. The Manchester school tried to make men realise the brotherhood of humanity, by pointing out the commercial advantages of peace. It sought to degrade the wonderful world into a common market-place for the buyer and the seller. It addressed itself to the lowest instincts, and it failed. War followed upon war, and the tradesman's creed did not prevent France and Germany from clashing together in blood-stained battle. There are others of our own day who seek to appeal to mere emotional sympathies, or to the shallow dogmas of some vague system of abstract ethics. They have their Peace Societies, so dear to the sentimentalists, and their proposals among those who have never read history. But mere emotional sympathy will not do. It is too variable, and too closely connected with the passions; and a board of arbitrators who, for the general welfare of the race, are to be deprived of the power of putting their decisions into execution, will not be of much avail. There is only one thing worse than Injustice, and that is Justice without her sword in her hand. When Right is not Might, it is Evil.
>
> No: the emotions will not make us cosmopolitan, any more than the greed for gain could do so. It is only by the cultivation of the habit of intellectual criticism that we shall be able to rise superior to race-prejudices.[2]
>
> Intellectual criticism will bind Europe together in bonds far closer than those that can be forged by shopman or sentimentalist. It will give us the peace that springs from understanding.[3]

The criticism of English in English for all who use English may well prove one of the great educational forces of the age and a source of strength to all who subscribe to the ideals associated with the growth of this vast language community.

[1] "The Critic as Artist" from *Intentions*, by Oscar Wilde, 12th edition, p. 210.
[2] Ibid, pp. 211–12.
[3] Ibid, p. 213.

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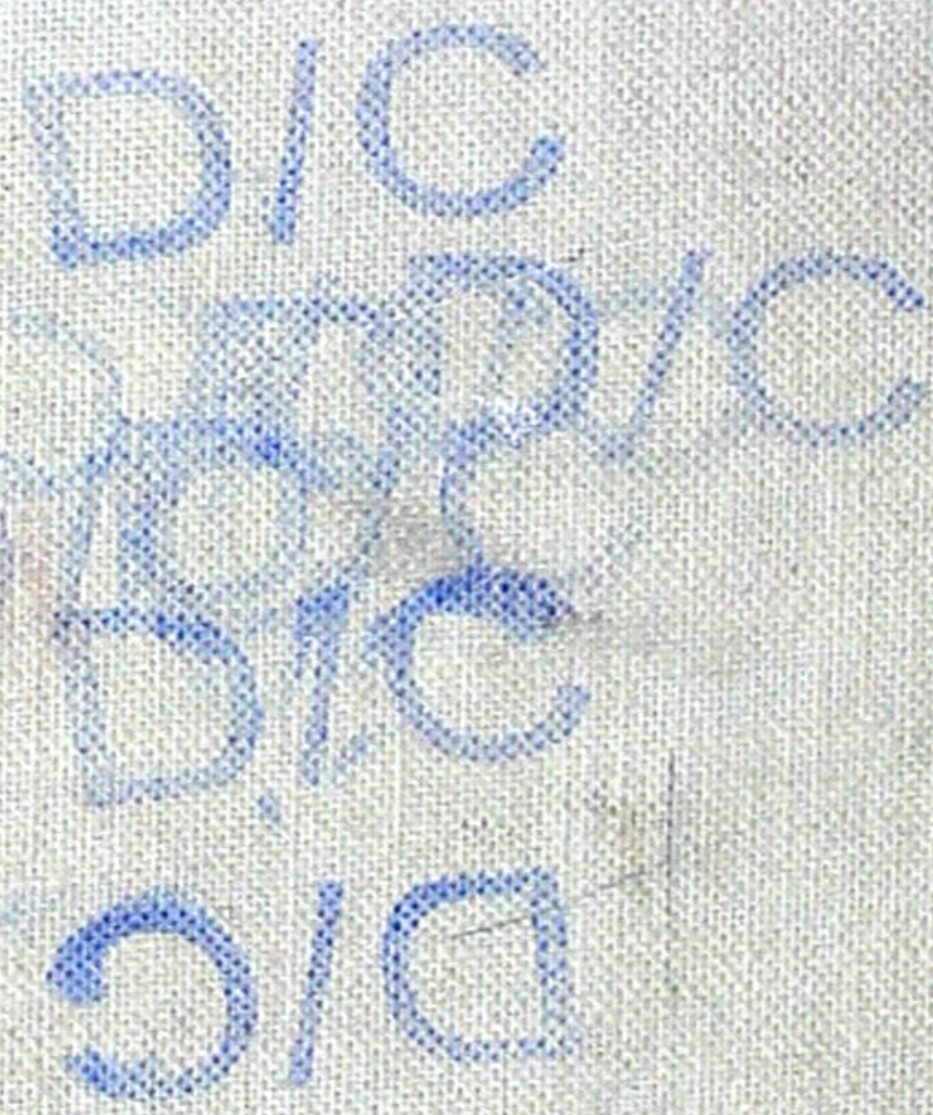
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